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Near East & South Asia

ALGERIA

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International Affairs

Brahimi Reaffirms Policy Toward Iran, France

93AF0296E Algiers EL WATAN in French 16 Dec 92 p 18

[Article: "Brahimi: 'A Firm Attitude Toward Iran'"]

[Text] In an interview granted to the daily LE JOURNAL yesterday, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lakhar Brahimi reaffirmed the basic principles of Algerian diplomacy.

Concerning Algeria's current problems with certain foreign countries, Brahimi indicated that "the country must respond to all aggression and has a whole range of responses (...). Diplomacy is one of those instruments."

Turning to the case of Iran, the foreign affairs minister said that "...Iran is a great and friendly country found in a region that is very close to us." He added that "we have adopted a very firm attitude toward Iran.... We have not closed our eyes to any of its statements."

For Brahimi, there can be no question of any break in diplomatic relations. "In serious-minded countries, such a break is a point one reaches not before, but after, a declaration of war."

"I assure you that the Iranians are fully cognizant of what it will cost them to be unpleasant toward Algeria," he explained. "It is enormously costly to them. Obviously, some actions cannot be made public." What does Iran want on an international level? "Iran hoped to have a government that would be in its debt. The Iranians missed an extraordinary opportunity. They can therefore not rejoice," Brahimi replied.

Turning to the matter of the "troubled" Algerian-French relations, our foreign affairs minister said, specifically concerning the Algerian visit by his French counterpart Dumas, that: "I invited the French minister and the invitation stands. It was confirmed by the president of the HCE [Higher State Council], Ali Kafi, but we agreed that the visit would take place after the newly installed ambassadors from the two countries were acquainted with their new posts (...). We are waiting for Ghazali, our ambassador to Paris, who is due to arrive any day now to discuss these issues." However, Brahimi says, "...no date has been set for his (Dumas') arrival."

Regarding the "quality" of bilateral relations between the two countries, Brahimi said that "relations between Algeria and France have never been normal and will not be for a long time to come (...). We have never asked France to get involved in our internal quarrels (...). The French know we are an important country for them. Our relations must take all these factors into account. But just as we are sensitive to anything written in that country, the French are also highly attuned to what is written in the Algerian press. I take this opportunity to ask newspapers to be more cautious in what they write, particularly concerning chiefs of state."

Accord With Italy To Strengthen Investments

93AF0318C Algiers EL WATAN in French 16 Dec 92 p 5

[Article by APS: "Investment Protection Accord With Italy Submitted to Deputies"]

[Text] Agreements signed by the Italian Government with Argentina (in 1990) and Algeria (1991) for the promotion and protection of investments were submitted recently to the Chamber of Deputies, which has begun the ratification process, sources in Rome said Monday afternoon.

The two accords were presented to the Chamber of Deputies by Mr. Emilio Colombo, minister of foreign affairs.

Under the accord between Italy and Algeria, each country will grant the other most favored nation status. The agreement also includes diverse incentives to promote Italian investment in Algeria and Algerian investment in Italy.

It is expected that a joint commission of representatives of the two governments will supervise implementation of the accord.

Mr. Colombo said the accord with Algeria "is intended to increase Italian investment by assuring our investors of the most favorable treatment possible under Algerian law."

Criticism in French, Moroccan Press Noted

93AF0314E Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French 9 Dec 92 p 5

[Article by A. Toumiate: "Virulent Anti-Algerian Campaign in Moroccan and French Media"—first two paragraphs are LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] A hostile and slanderous anti-Algerian campaign has been orchestrated in the past few days. With ulterior motives that are perfectly obvious, the French media, like some weeklies and dailies are inveighing against anything that might help straighten out the situation or find any kind of solution to the crisis that our country is experiencing. Some will say that this is customary for the French media.

Unfortunately, this "assistance" from overseas finds a favorable echo among our Moroccan neighbors who do not show the slightest reluctance to follow suit and attack a "brotherly" country whose only fault may have been to safeguard its dignity.

According to the French weekly LE POINT, "the Algerian Army has reached the Rubicon." In its last issue, LE POINT writes in particular that "in view of the political gridlock, it (the army) is subject to multiple pressures that push it to step out from behind the political scene and get directly involved in managing the country." Can you imagine! Could it be that resolving to tackle terrorism means something else for LE POINT?

Taking it from there, our fellow newspaper MAROC-HEBDO in turn considers the present situation in Algeria. Having nothing better to do (it is true that Morocco's case is not comparable to Algeria's), this weekly, through its editor Mohamed Selhami, writing in the 27 November-3 December issue, expresses its concern about solving the crisis, reporting that: "The macabre escalation that gains

ground every day causes us to fear the worst for our neighbor, namely bloody confrontations, either along party lines or generalized."

As for EL BAYANE, the organ of the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS—communist), it does not pull its punches.

Its editor, Nadir Yata, states that war has already begun in Algeria. In its commentary of Saturday 5 December 1992, he writes: "It is actually a war, which increasingly possesses the dismal characteristics of this atrocity, that is taking place in Algeria. The curfew that was just instituted in seven departments surrounding the capital shows that the HCE [Higher State Council] and the government have recourse to all coercive and repressive weapons to face the merciless 'jihad' proclaimed by the out-and-out fundamentalists." Reading carefully what our EL BAYANE colleague and "comrade" writes, we might be tempted to believe that the country is being put to the fire and the sword. One thing that the Moroccan daily's editor appears to overlook (on purpose?) in his article is that the institution of the curfew is part of the fight against terrorism, based on the laws in force. Later in his article he observes with great distress what is going on in Algeria: "(...) Then, it means killing, butchering. The FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] people, obviously, have gone underground. They fire at anyone who might be hostile to them: policemen, gendarmes, soldiers, mayors, union members..." If we are to believe EL BAYANE, the genocides of the Bosnian and Sahraoui people are next to nothing compared to that. Frankly, our Moroccan neighbors are completely wrong.

They are so wrong that they end up shooting themselves in the foot, as the author of the commentary puts it so well. "We must always be attentive to the need for justice and democracy if we are to prevent bonesetters from coming and peddling their fantasies instead of remedies." Need I say more?

All this campaign, whose instigators suffer from chronic and incurable nostalgia cannot fail to achieve the opposite of what was intended!

It goes without saying that Algeria is, and will be, a member of the UMA [Arab Maghreb Union], even if that seems to displease some who show themselves all too willing to interfere in the internal affairs of another country in a vain attempt to create a diversion while choosing to ignore the servitude of a people whose condition is among the worst in the world.

Internal Affairs

Abdesselam Emphasizes Maintaining Order

93AF0323B Algiers LIBERTE in French 22 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by R.N.: "Belaid Abdesselam to the Gendarmes: 'It Is Time for Every Algerian To Make Up His Mind'"]

[Text] *Less than a week after his meeting with police officials, the head of the government insisted on speaking to the National Gendarmerie.*

Prime Minister Belaid Abdesselam said Monday that "the effort (in the antiterrorist struggle) cannot be the sole

responsibility of the security forces," who have had to pay a high price to guarantee the safety of our citizens and defend the nation's institutions.

At a meeting with National Gendarmerie officials in Cheraga, the head of the Executive Branch deplored "the indifference" of citizens to acts of terrorism and subversion.

"Operations conducted by security forces in the field must find their extension among the population, particularly its live forces," he said.

"It is time for every Algerian to make up his mind and understand that without a government and the determination to protect that government, it is his very existence that is threatened," he added.

Abdesselam also paid homage to the job performed by the Gendarmerie and other elements of the security forces in providing protection for the government and the enduring nature of its institutions.

"Your sacrifices have had a positive moral and political impact and you provide constant proof that the government is very much alive," he emphasized.

The results obtained by all security forces in the fight against terrorism and to maintain law and order "have restored our citizens' hope and dissipated the doubts of our partners abroad concerning our ability to halt the crisis and stay the course as a government and nation," the head of the government said.

Abdesselam reiterated the government's determination to wage a "relentless" fight against all those who have tried to destroy the Algerian Government and undermine its foundations.

He said "there can be no possible compromise with such people when it is a matter of imposing the existence of a government and therefore of eradicating anything that might stand in the way of such a noble undertaking."

Abdesselam also reaffirmed his government's determination to "give priority to anything affecting the country's internal and external defense."

"We cannot rob Peter to pay Paul when it comes to defense," he said, pledging that the forces of law and order will be given all possible means to increase their operational efficiency.

Turning to the socioeconomic aspect, Abdesselam emphasized that the action of his government was mainly aimed at halting the deterioration of the nation's economy, but that he "would do nothing socially or economically that might complicate the political situation." Furthermore, "I would prefer to sacrifice economic effectiveness to social justice in order to improve the handling of the crisis," he said. Also participating in the meeting were M'hamed Tolba, minister delegate for public security, and Major General Abbes Ghezail, commanding officer of the National Gendarmerie.

Haroun Concludes Situation 'Less Serious'

93AF0314D Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
13 Dec 92 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Ali Haroun to French Daily: 'The Situation in Algeria Is Less Serious Than One Year Ago'"]

[Text] The present situation in Algeria is no longer as serious as it was one year ago, although terrorism has not been completely suppressed yet; this, in substance, is what Mr. Ali Haroun, member of the HCE [Higher State Council], stated in an interview published yesterday by the French daily LA CROIX-L'EVENEMENT.

He noted that the situation today is far from being what it was in January and February 1992, when Algeria found itself on the verge of civil war every Friday, at the time of the weekly prayer.

When he said that terrorism had not been completely suppressed yet, Mr. Ali Haroun indicated that since the appeal made to those who might have a "change of heart," over two months ago, about 100 terrorists have surrendered to the authorities. A "remarkable" number, but "not an extraordinary" one, he conceded.

Mr. Ali Haroun also mentioned that "the hunt for weapons" (not for pistols but for the submachine guns, which were mostly stolen from murdered policemen) has led to the recovery of "80 of those, from killed terrorists." In this respect, he noted that "there have not been any considerable arms shipments to Algeria." If that were the case, he pointed out, "we would have had to deal with a more virulent form of terrorism."

In addition, Mr. Ali Haroun said that the army considers that it is "the civilian government's job" to "manage" the crisis. He added: "We still have that luck in Algeria that our army is not divided, that it is united and reacts like one man." Otherwise, he concluded, there would be an explosion.

Speaking of Algerian-French relations, Mr. Ali Haroun said that he "did not understand" why it took five months for the French chief of state to accept the credentials of the new Algerian ambassador to France, Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali.

"We were told," he observed, "that Francois Mitterrand was sick, but we noticed that this did not prevent him from traveling thousands of kilometers. The same is true of Roland Dumas's visit to Algiers, for which no date has been set yet."

Finally, he wondered whether: "Paris is dragging its feet for the good reason that the French state has two irons in the fire. That the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] might come to power," he added, "is a plausible thing for France. Therefore, it is waiting, playing hard to get."

Role, Formation of New Tribunal Discussed

93AF0315C Algiers EL WATAN in French 14 Dec 92 p 5

[Text] The special tribunals required by the legislative decree relative to the antistubversion and antiterrorism effort have been established.

The Higher State Council (HCE) made the announcement in a communique published last evening and it "formulated the need for improving the judiciary procedures now in use."

In establishing the special tribunals, the HCE has completed the array of mechanisms to combat terrorism. Its action comes after the expiration of the two-month grace period during which individuals sought for terrorist or subversive acts could turn themselves in.

The legislative decree of 30 September 1992 called for the creation of three "special courts" to conduct investigations in cases of terrorism and subversion. Each court is made up of five judges (one presiding judge and four associated judges).

In addition, an alternate presiding judge and from three to ten alternate associate judges are named.

The special courts are also assigned a prosecutor chosen among the members of the public prosecution office and one or several chambers of investigation whose judges are chosen from among the members of the bench. The judges of the special courts are appointed either by presidential decree or by order, neither of which may be published.

To make their identities public or to divulge information that could help to identify them is punishable by two to five years' imprisonment.

The legislative decree of 30 September sets out severe sentences for terrorist or subversive acts, ranging from five years' imprisonment to the death penalty.

In addition to establishing tougher sentences than those called for by criminal procedural law, the decree allows the special courts to try cases more quickly. Article 26 states that "the investigation must be closed within three months of the date on which the investigating judge was assigned to the case."

Also, the limit on custody has been extended, not to exceed 12 days.

Under Article 35, the rulings of the special courts can be appealed to the Supreme Court, which must issue its decision within two months of receiving an appeal. In the event that a special court's ruling is overturned, the case is sent back to the special court to which other judges will be appointed or to another special court.

Analysis of Who Responded to Amnesty

93AF0271A Algiers LIBERTE in French 5 Dec 92 p 5

[Text] Article 40 of the law against terrorism reportedly has permitted more than 100 young people implicated in subversive activity and sought by the security forces to turn themselves in to the Gendarmerie and thereby renounce violence.

Among the 105 persons who have responded to the amnesty by turning themselves in to the Gendarmerie only nine were held in preventive custody because of "their implication in crimes where blood flowed." They will benefit from a reduction in their sentences. All of the others were released

after their identities were verified. This figure does not take into account individuals who turned themselves in to the police. At the moment the police have provided no indication of their disposition.

Article 40 of the law against terrorism, which was promulgated on 1 October 1992, made it possible, during a period of two months, for persons implicated in terrorism or subversion and who actually engaged in such activities to have their sentences noticeably lessened if they committed "acts involving the death or permanent injury of a person." The article provides that no action, pure and simple, will be taken when the charges outstanding against those applying for the amnesty are minor in nature.

The available figures reveal that it is above all individuals indirectly involved in activities which caused death who decided to abandon living clandestinely.

No leaders of clandestine groups were included among those who applied for amnesty. It is also noted that the majority of those who applied for amnesty had a certain level of education. According to the Gendarmerie, three-quarters of them have a high-school diploma, and nearly half of them are teachers. They are between 28 and 35 years old, and most of them live in the eastern part of the country. They decided "to end their escapade" in order "to avoid falling into a life of crime," or because "clandestine life became impossible to become accustomed to." Almost all of these young people belong to families opposed to terrorism. Some of them have even been encouraged by their close relatives to get in touch with the security services. The Gendarmerie stated that those applying for amnesty were "threatened with death" and showed "a great deal of courage" by deciding to break with the small armed groups which they belonged to.

Even though their number was not high in absolute terms, some of those applying for amnesty are positively regarded by sociologists in relative terms. Compared with the number of persons arrested, which is estimated at about 1,200, this group was considered "substantial" in the eyes of observers of Algerian society in whose view extremism in Algeria is the result "of a long period of maturation of a break between the state and society, which makes it unlikely that those who left the ranks of society will turn back without the cover of social legitimacy." Specialists on Algerian society state that the decision to apply for amnesty is explained by the fact that these generally well-educated young people have "a sense of rationality that made it possible for them to reason it out and therefore to step back from their decision to break with society." Also, the fact that they were rejected by their families for having become involved with terrorism also was a factor in their decision to apply for amnesty, these observers said.

This analytical approach helps us understand why no chief of an armed group has decided to turn himself in. According to the Gendarmerie, the Islamic Armed Movement has deliberately placed at the head of these groups people with a low level of education in order to avoid any risk of opposition or rebellion. Finally, these specialists state that, "the risk that a person who has applied for amnesty will return to

the terrorists is slight," to the extent that his reconciliation with society is a "well-thought out decision."

'Terrorist' Found Linked to Drugs, Trabendo

93AF0275D Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
4-5 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by APS: "The FIS and Dirty Money"]

[Text] Dozens of people implicated in terrorist or subversive operations have surrendered to the security forces, who for their part are constantly making arrests and dismantling the networks forged all over the country by former FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] organizations "in collusion with bandits and trabendos."

It has become increasingly evident that the nexus between the terrorists and those engaged in gangsterism and trabendo, long considered possible, was in fact a close alliance, according to authorities whose success in closing in on the Islamic activists has put them in a better position to see how the relationship was structured.

The delegate minister for security disclosed just recently that "large quantities of drugs were found in possession of the arrested terrorists, who were involved in both petty and major crimes."

In addition, printing equipment and other sophisticated machinery confiscated in arrests around the country attest to the sizable financial resources at the disposal of the ex-FIS militants.

According to well-informed observers, part of the "dirty money" is recycled to fund activities to destabilize the country and to finance "desperadoes" trained to kill members of the security forces regardless of whether they serve in the police, the constabulary, or simply the army.

An indication of changed tactics, in response to the battering the terrorists have received at the hands of security forces, is the series of attacks against civilians that began last September with the assassination of an academic and trade unionist in Constantine. Since then, almost a dozen more citizens have died in such attacks, the most recent of which (not successful) targeted the secretary general of the UGTA [National Union of Algerian Workers].

The authorities concerned say the situation, although far from favorable for the terrorists, is nevertheless sufficiently disturbing and "unhealthy" to justify a curfew of indeterminate duration in no less than seven of the wilayas in the central part of the country.

The principal refuges of the terrorists are believed to be located in the capital and six surrounding wilayas. The cities and even the hills in these regions have been the main theaters of operation in the last year.

In opting for new measures, the authorities have stepped up the antiterrorist struggle, confident as they are that the "hard-core elements" are "isolated, identified, and targeted" and all that remains to be done now is to cut off the small armed groups from their supporters in the major urban centers.

Over and above security considerations, however, the authorities are also determined to attack the terrorist problem at its roots by banning—this is already under way—any elected assembly, cultural or social organization considered an appendage of the dissolved FIS and serving as logistic support bases for terrorism.

FIS Underground Transmitter Destroyed

93AF0314A Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
14 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by A. Hayane: "Saout El-Wafa: Another Transmitter Destroyed"—first paragraph is LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] One of the underground radio transmitters of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS—dissolved), broadcasting in the FM band in the Algiers area, is said to have been localized and seized by the Algiers wilayah criminal investigation department about 10 days ago.

Since last 6 August, the radio station, called Saout El-Wafa, had been broadcasting every Wednesday for 15 to 20 minutes between 1600 and 1800; as is known (see EL WATAN dated 16 November), it had already lost two transmitters, the dismantling of which required the intervention of Air Force helicopters. Acting on a tip, the investigators reportedly arrested two FIS militants in a house located in the Soustara (lower Kasbah) working class neighborhood. These individuals, we learned, were found possessing two automatic weapons and a Berreta pistol. The criminal investigation department is also said to have seized a utility vehicle of the Peugeot J5 type. The compact radio transmitter was probably set up in the back of the vehicle. Sermons recorded on cassettes are also said to have been found.

Yet, according to our sources, this transmitter was the last one still operating. FIS sympathizers in the Algiers area, who used to listen to Saout El-Wafa may also have noticed that it has been "silent" since last Wednesday.

The pirate radio was used to broadcast FIS propaganda denouncing the government and short recordings calling to "jihad."

We should also recall that, according to some sources, the dissolved Islamist party was considering setting up a radio station in Sudanese territory, with the consent of Khartoum authorities. Negotiations with Hassan Tourabi, head of the Sudanese fundamentalists, are thus said to have reached a "very advanced" stage.

Controversy Over Torture Allegations Continues

93AF0229A Algiers AL-KHABAR in Arabic 16 Nov 92 p 3

[Article: "Torture in Algeria: Ali Yahia Confirms; Fathallah Regrets; Bara Awaits"]

[Text] Ali Yahia Abdennour's insistence that there are cases of torture and human rights violations in Algeria was confirmed yesterday by a statement by the Algerian Human Rights Association, which is headed by Mr. Fathallah.

Yesterday, the Human Rights Association, which sees that its mission is embodied in watching out for human rights, expressed its regret for the continued commission of violations of varying degrees of seriousness that recall memories of some incidents that cannot be forgotten despite the lessons and examples of a not too distant past—a reference to the October incidents.

The statement makes it clear that Algeria is in a crisis, despite its great human and material capabilities. But officials and politicians think that they can violate laws that they themselves have established on the pretext that this is required for the phase Algeria is undergoing and that they certainly seek a better life for the citizens. Some of them led Algeria to the October incidents that saw serious and unacceptable human rights violations.

The Algerian Human Rights Association concludes from this that it is impossible to separate the battle for human rights from the political battle. The association believes that the talk about separating the two is an illusion because political options determine the economic situation, the standard of which is determined by how well citizens and politicians comprehend human rights.

As for fighting violence, the association believes that applying the republic's laws firmly and soundly makes it unnecessary to resort to oppressive measures that undermine basic liberties. The association has also demanded an end to the unjustifiable violations.

On the other hand, the statement made note of the acts of violence and the assassinations to which security men are subjected and has repeatedly condemned such acts. Previously, the association also denounced the use of administrative detention and called for ending such activity because the creation of security detention centers has tarnished Algeria's reputation.

Regarding the media, the statement says that the 1989 Constitution, which opened the door for party plurality, provides for freedom of the press, which is one of the Algerian people's main demands.

Concluding its statement, the association emphasized the need to restore the people's legitimate right to express their will democratically through the representatives they elect with utter freedom.

The issue of human rights violations has been the subject of a feud in recent weeks between Ali Yahia Abdennour, chairman of the Algerian Association for the Defense of Human Rights, one of the main defenders of leaders of the disbanded FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], and a source close to the Ministry of Interior. Rezzak Bara, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, became involved in this dispute later.

Ali Yahia Abdennour has affirmed that he has information and files on cases of torture in Algeria. A source close to the Ministry of Interior has urged Abdennour to familiarize the ministry with the violations and with the file in his possession.

Abdenmour has responded to this invitation negatively, assuring AL-KHABAR that torture is not confined to just one or two cases or to a number of incidents perpetrated separately. Rather, it has become an administrative practice, and the government and the ministry must shoulder their responsibilities. He added that he will only hand the information and the files in his possession over to the judiciary or to a human rights salvation commission, whose formation he has proposed.

Abdenmour has asserted that he possesses testimonies and documents signed by the people concerned. He has pointed out that he has received from the security detention center in (Rakkan) a letter on the investigation conducted by AL-MUJAHID, a daily newspaper. The writers note on page seven of their letter the parties to which the letter has been sent, including the National Human Rights Commission. People did not understand this point the way Yahia intended it, and a news agency later reported that Ali Yahia Abdenmour had sent the file to the head of the National Human Rights Commission. This has not happened. This report is what has motivated Rezzak Bara to respond to Abdenmour negatively, denying that he had received the file or even the citizens' complaints that, he said, the commission is prepared to receive because it is prepared to defend human rights.

RPN Spokesperson on Membership

93AF0318D Algiers *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE* in French
17 Dec 92 p 4

[Interview with Ali Lounici, vice president and spokesman of the National Membership Committee of the RPN, by S.L.; place and date not given: "Lounici Says RPN Not Open to Everyone"]

[Text] Much has been said and written about the RPN [National Patriotic Rally] since the assassination of its founder, Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf. For the most part, the coverage has been neither constructive nor flattering; a fact that does a disservice, to say the least, to those who have undertaken the mission of making it a reality. Despite this, and despite all the words that have been written and spoken about it, it seems progress is being made here and there toward uniting the patriotic forces. Admittedly there have been problems, but no one expects the clearing of a new path to be easy when one must overcome knee-jerk reactions, struggle against the status quo, and work toward the goal of catapulting the country irremediably into modernity.

It is a job for a titan, a task as immense as the man who pointed the way and laid the cornerstones. Will it prevail in its quiet struggle to realize its full potential and bring real hope? Convinced that what the RPN needs in order to grow strong is hard work and selfless service—not sterile polemical debates—the membership committee, whose members claim they have no political ambitions, has vowed to steer the RPN to safe harborage, in other words to ensure the best possible conditions for the holding of the national conference.

[*LE SOIR D'ALGERIE*] To dispel any doubts about the matter, can you tell us how the membership committee came to be created?

[Lounici] After the death of Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, with a certain spontaneity, which is in reality characteristic of the Algerian people, multitudes of citizens decided to band together and continue working to realize the ideals of the late president. But under cover of this blossoming of small committees to support the patriotic rally, the movement was infiltrated by a crowd of political adventurers, people who had designs other than joining together to help the country emerge from the crisis in which it was floundering. The HCE [Higher State Council] became aware of this fact, especially in the aftermath of a certain rally held at Harcha Hall that was attended by militants of the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy], the PAGS [Socialist Vanguard Party], and the old FLN [National Liberation Front party] who became almost abusive, urging all and sundry to spell out in greater detail than ever before just what they intended to do to advance Mr. Boudiaf's project. The press, looking for news, only did its job by covering the event and billing it an "RPN rally," but in reality it was all manipulated. I am speaking not only of the parties but also of people with influence who were constantly trying to manipulate it. The HCE became cognizant of this and contacted a number of personalities to ask their opinion about RPN's future. These individuals were then consulted, before getting down to the work of analyzing the situation and systematically evaluating the support committees, primarily in terms of their coordination and cohesion. The standing committee was also contacted by the HCE, and one of its members became a member of the membership committee.

I insist, however, that in creating that organ, the HCE was only implementing the ideas of Mr. Boudiaf.

The personalities that serve on it were not, as many people like to say, "dumped" on the RPN. What actually legitimizes its creation are the ideas themselves, which are contained in the platform and supported by the HCE.

[*LE SOIR D'ALGERIE*] What criteria governed the selection of the membership committee?

[Lounici] There are two categories of people on the membership committee: About 20 members were designated by the HCE as individuals, on the basis of their views, commitments, and past actions. In other words, they are people who did not contribute to the plight in which Algeria now finds itself. Accordingly, when we speak of the rupture with the past that we wish to effect, we say that those who participated in the disastrous mismanagement of the country from 1962 on should have no part in managing it in the future. We are going to try to sell this idea to our militants, especially the young. The second category consists of about 30 members representing various voluntary associations which one way or another have expressed their support for the Boudiaf project. These organizations were contacted by the HCE, which asked them to designate representatives so they could participate in the work of the membership committee.

But we have no political ambitions, and our sole objective is to help the movement get on its feet.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] What role does the standing committee play in the RPN's plans? Isn't it discussed in the RPN's charter?

[Lounici] It was never envisioned, either in the platform or in the document prepared while Boudiaf was still alive. The only committee created by Boudiaf was the Ain-Temouchent committee, which he himself installed while on a visit to that city. He was supposed to establish another one at Oran, but circumstances prevented him from doing so. He was also going to set up the Annaba committee, but was assassinated first.

Thus, at Mr. Boudiaf's death, there was only one committee, the Ain-Temouchent committee. After his departure, due to the popularity of the RPN project, committees started springing up almost everywhere. The need for a coordinating body became apparent. People didn't know who they should deal with. A goodly number made contact with the Ain-Temouchent committee. As the only official organ, it took it upon itself to respond to these requests. The post office box that the committee opened in Kouba was not sufficient, since people would still call on the telephone and ask to talk to someone, etc. That was how the standing committee originally came to open an office on Boulevard Zighout Youcef. At the start, it was a branch of the Ain-Temouchent committee. Inasmuch as considerable time had elapsed before the membership committee was set up, people turned to them instead. But there is actually no basis in the documents or in the bylaws of the organization for its calling itself the national standing committee rather than a branch of Ain-Temouchent.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Where is the RPN now with regard to implementation of the project? What stage of development has it reached?

[Lounici] The phase of evaluating the existing committees is not yet complete. It will be finished by the end of the year, because we have only recently had time to travel all around the country to make contact, hold working sessions with the committees, and get a sense for what is happening. I must tell you this: The RPN is not open to everyone, although we are not trying to be exclusivist, there are certain criteria for membership. Naturally, the committees are open to all Algerian men and women, but you must prove your patriotism in order to join.

You cannot be a terrorist and also a member of the RPN. Schematically, I see there being two extremes. [Thus by the same token] you cannot be a member of the RPN if you are among those responsible for the country's economic and political ruin. To tell the truth, this is what is being evaluated right now. The RPN is certainly a mass movement, but above all it is a movement of patriots.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] In the final analysis, is it an apolitical association or a large political movement?

[Lounici] As the membership committee, we are not in a position to prejudge what the future of the movement will be. After the committees are evaluated, our next task will be to broaden the RPN's base prior to the national conference,

to clarify and harmonize all these activities. The national conference will decide the future direction of the RPN.

In our opinion, as a provisional committee charged with the single and time-limited task of guiding the RPN to the national conference we had no right to proclaim ourselves a party or national movement, a political or apolitical coalition. We decided as a provisional body to constitute ourselves as a nonpolitical association.

The provisional structure is prescribed in the 1990 law concerning voluntary associations. We wrote our bylaws on that basis, and our registration was accepted as such: It is the provisional committee, not the RPN, which is an apolitical association. Only the national conference can speak for the RPN's future.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] If those who were behind the assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf are not unmasked, what steps might be taken to bring the truth to light?

[Lounici] For our part, we have taken it upon ourselves and sworn an oath to remain faithful to Boudiaf's memory. Clearly, it is by working even more ardently for the consolidation of the RPN that we will one day come to avenge him.

We want those behind his assassination—his execution, one might almost say—to be unmasked and judged by a people's tribunal.

Will that ever happen? Only by strengthening the RPN will we be in a position to forcefully demand the truth about this odious assassination. In the present environment, I don't think we are strong enough to force the truth out.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] How do you view the struggle against terrorism, the imposition of the curfew?

[Lounici] We support the action of the HCE and the government. We support it because we think that in the current phase, the top priorities must be restoring national stability and combating terrorism. In reality the choice is very simple: Either one is for it and therefore opts for stability, or one is against it and becomes an accomplice to those who want to destroy the country. I am speaking of the ex-FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], the whole financial mafia whose fine hand can be seen in all these terrorist operations. We already expressed our solidarity with the UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers] in its struggle against terrorism, at the time of the attempted assassination of Mr. Abdelhak Benhamouda. We also support all the security services that are trying to clean things up. We shed no tears when a terrorist is eliminated or arrested, because "they" have no compunctions about shedding the blood of innocents.

We are against all those who are trying to destabilize the country, and we are irreversibly on the side of the forces of order who watch over the security of our citizens.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Mr. Belaid Abdesselam has also talked about attacking the evil at its roots. Where should he concentrate his efforts?

[Lounici] Well, what are the roots? The roots are the sources of the financing that enables these people to buy loyalties, arms, vehicles, and build a whole nationwide infrastructure. What are the sources of financing? There are external sources, about which I do not wish to speak, and internal sources consisting of a multitude of charitable, cultural, and trade-union associations—I am referring to the SIT [Islamic Labor Syndicate]—which are working in convergent directions to strengthen the ex-FIS. Smugglers, the mafia, and even merchants are helping the FIS continue its attacks...

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] Many people believe these conditions are the result of 30 years of waste, corruption, and social injustice, not the root of the problem...

[Lounici] Thirty years of waste and corruption have created the situation that faces us today. Social injustice, "hogra," and exclusion have certainly victimized many people, but they (the victims) are not the ones financing terrorism.

You can also take the example of officials in certain dairas or wilayas who lacked the courage to do their duty. Here's the attitude: I'll just wait to see which way the wind is blowing, and then I'll decide. When Mr. Belaid Abdessellam spoke about attacking the roots, part of what he had in mind was cleaning out the bureaucracy. You saw the attack at the airport. How could that have happened without [inside] accomplices? These are the roots of terrorism that must be attacked.

However, it is clear we must also combat social ills. The minister of interior, in his most recent statement at Oran, spoke about the school system, indicating that one of the roots of the problem is Algeria's devastated education system.

Although we believe nothing can be achieved unless the state provides security and exerts authority throughout the country, we can serve as a counterforce. We support the HCE and the government just so long as they follow Boudiaf's path.

If tomorrow they abandon it, there's nothing to prevent us from taking a different position. In the current state of play, we support them because we agree with the priorities they have set.

[LE SOIR D'ALGERIE] What contribution do you see RPN making to the building and stability of the country?

[Lounici] We want to work for unity. The very effort to bring people together contributes to the greater unity of the Algerian people. We think that sooner or later elections must be put back on the nation's agenda, and we think by that time the RPN will have made a great contribution to making the Algerian people aware of Boudiaf's platform and mobilizing them in support of its basic principles, so that never again will we see 8 million abstentionists and never again will we see movements appropriate religion or language and try to impose a feudal vision on the Algerian nation. What we want politically is to help catapult Algeria once and for all into modernity and democracy. That is how we see our role in the building and safeguarding of the country. We bow our heads once more in memory of the

victims of terrorism, as we promise their families our support and active solidarity as the Patriotic Rally.

Opposition Parties Consider Democratic Alliance 93AF0323C Algiers LIBERTE in French 21 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by Rachid Ikhenoussene: "Toward an Alliance?"; first paragraph is LIBERTE lead; second paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] FFS-MDA-FIS (dissolved)

Following the suspension of the electoral process, the institution of the Higher State Council (HCE), and the proclamation of the state of emergency, the opposition has been reduced to its simplest expression. Many forms of assembly and coordination have been initiated, but in vain. Hocine Ait-Ahmed and Ahmed Ben Bella, two leading opposition figures, have even left Algeria.

According to ALGERIE CONFIDENTIEL, a weekly published in Geneva, "Ben Bella, Ait-Ahmed, and Rabah Kebir are working with utmost discretion on a 'London Statement 1A.'"

The weekly adds that "if contacts between the three leaders' closest aides achieve results, there will be an FFS-FIS-MDA [Front of Socialist Forces-Islamic Front of Salvation-Movement for Democracy in Algeria] alliance in a kind of 'Democratic Front' whose main demand would be a return to a democratic election process."

The same source adds that the three parties disagree about which institution should be elected first. The FFS, euphoric over the results obtained in the elections of 26 December 1991, believes that work should begin with a Constituent Assembly entrusted with the task of approving a new constitution. For their part, the FIS and MDA prefer to organize presidential elections as scheduled when the HCE was created.

In other words, major political maneuvering seems to have begun. Seven years after the London declaration signed jointly by the FFS and MDA, in exile at the time, another pact confirming an alliance of Algerian opposition parties is emerging abroad.

The essential question posed today mainly deals with the basis on which the fight to meet demands contained in the declaration being drafted will be waged.

If the case has already been settled for Rabah Kebir, whose party has been banned, the mystery remains unsolved for Ait-Ahmed and Ben Bella. Have they left for good or will they return to Algeria soon?

Certain observers of the national political scene do not think the two leaders will return soon. Indeed, it is their own belief that the lockout instituted by the state of emergency prevents them from conducting the political activity of their parties properly. The ban on meetings, rallies, and other public demonstrations renders their presence practically useless, they say.

Whatever the case, there are those who believe that owing to the moral capital conferred on them by their status as

historic leaders, politicians of their stature must be with their people at times as difficult as those in which we are now living.

One immediately thinks of the example set by Lebanese leaders Pierre Gemayels, Kamel Djomblats, and Camille Chamouns, who shared the grief and pain of their people during the terrible times of the civil war.

New MDRA President on Political Situation

93AF0315E Algiers LIBERTE in French 14 Dec 92 p 7

[Interview with Madjid Amirat, MDRA (Democratic Movement for Algerian Renewal) president, by Djamel Eddine Haberra; place and date not given]

[Text] The president of the Democratic Movement for Algerian Renewal (MDRA), Mr. Madjid Amirat, age 37, has a doctorate in physics. He is also the son of the late Slimane Amirat who was once faced with a dilemma and chose Algeria over democracy. Madjid Amirat is the man who believes that the debt should be paid by those who contracted it.

[Haberra] You were recently elected president of the MDRA. Do you intend to follow the course that your late father took?

[Amirat] It is my mission to continue the work of my father, Slimane Amirat, who always advocated a very clear policy focussed largely on Algeria.

He pinpointed the crucial problem, which is to preserve Algeria's national unity. I think that Algerians now know what Da Slimane had in his heart, but it is necessary to recall the difficulties that the party has experienced since its founding.

Founded by the late Krim Belkacem and Slimane Amirat, the MDRA was a product of the 1962 political crisis. The government of the time used every means possible to bring down the party's leaders.

Slimane Amirat was sentenced to death and later—after arrests, torture and other humiliations—Krim Belkacem was assassinated in 1970, Terbouche Mourad was assassinated in 1972, and Tansaout Belkacem died an accidental death (?) in Tunis in 1970. Amirat escaped the same fate for the simple reason that he was in the hands of the government.

[Haberra] Algeria is going through painful times. What is the MDRA's position on the present state of affairs?

[Amirat] The MDRA would like nothing more than to say that all is well with Algeria, but it cannot say that. By every indication, Algeria is in a multidirectional crisis, a state of affairs that is stalled at the political level, resulting in a sort of permanent temporariness; add to that a shattered political class whose members are all pulling in their own directions. Algeria is in search of herself. We are among those who love this country and are willing to sacrifice ourselves for our country despite the severity of the problems. So we must humbly pursue the work to be done, find a solution to the crisis, and preserve what is essential—Algeria. The circumstances require a great deal of sang-froid

and clear thinking because in order to find a remedy, we must be able to determine what ails Algeria.

[Haberra] According to Mr. Belaid Abdesselam, a party with a membership of 15 is not representative. Do you agree with the notion of big parties versus small parties?

[Amirat] Mr. Belaid Abdesselam's statements are inappropriate. They are not in keeping with a spirit of calm. There has been too much talk of political parties in terms of small parties, sanafir, or private groups. An APC [People's Communal Assemblies] should seek to be a forum for proposals. There are no big or small parties, only big or small ideas. Ideas are what count for us. The MDRA made the choice as a way of marking our movement's openness to society as a whole. The term "APC" does not bother us in the least. When Mr. Belaid Abdesselam was named prime minister, the circumstances were different. He sounded the themes of patriotism, nationalism, and self-reliance. We hoped and even thought that he had changed when economic austerity was instituted and that he would fight a determined battle against the monster that is corruption.

But his words are contradicted by the recent decisions. Belaid thrown up his hands in the fight against corruption. The recent decisions only stifle the private sector where jobs are created. Many companies will feel the repercussions of that decision. The formation of ad hoc committees will fuel further corruption.

[Haberra] Is there anything new in the program announced by the prime minister?

[Amirat] The government is dragging its feet when it comes to tackling the real problems at the tax level. It is crucial that tax equity be encouraged. There is no justice at the present time. Instead, there is a great deal of tax evasion that could be brought under by monitoring the external signs of wealth. Belaid has not been true to his commitments.

All that we know about his program is superficial since he did not offer concrete, numerical guidelines. What will happen if it fails? What will be the state of affairs in Algeria then?

For that reason, it would be much wiser to bring all of us on board (by allowing the opposition to participate effectively). Hence the need for technical national unity that could draw on the contributions of new and competent men. At present, however, the government would prefer a compliant opposition, content to applaud its decisions.

[Haberra] The atmosphere of tension in Algeria is such that few political parties are will to speak out. What about the MDRA?

[Amirat] As an advocate of dialogue, the MDRA would like to see all weapons silenced.

The situation is one of total confusion. Any individual might be a terrorist. So, if the scourge of terrorism is to be eradicated, the ground in which it breeds—all the social problems and pressures on the citizens—must be eliminated. The government terrorist must expose terrorist acts for what they are, because the perpetrators are taking

advantage of the many problems that plague citizens (the loss of purchasing power, unemployment, etc.)

[Haberra] What can you tell us about the "Group of Seven" and the apparent withdrawal by two of the parties that belonged to it?

[Amirat] The "Group of Seven" was created to prove that dialogue is possible among Algerians, even when their visions of society differ. It is not an alliance, but a group that engages in dialogue and consultation.

For that reason, at a time of exclusion, it allows for dialogue and definition of a foundation. We should recall that the "Seven" signed a platform (on 25 April 1992), the main thrusts of which were to preserve Algerian unity, to restore stability, banish violence whatever its source, and pursue the democratic process.

Who would not be willing to sign on to that, I ask you? The MDRA is willing to work with every other political party. I cannot say anything about the two parties that have either withdrawn from the group or suspended their activities in the group.

No conclusions should be drawn about supposed intentions. Furthermore, the "Five" recently met to draft an open letter to the HCE [Higher State Council]. That letter has not been published by the national press, except in bits and pieces.

[Haberra] You speak of economic crisis in your open letter to the HCE. That raises the issue of the debt, or at least the origins of the debt. What is your view on that subject?

[Amirat] We know nothing about the debt. Is it 26, 30, or 40 billion dollars? No one knows how much it amounts to. The specter of the debt is being used to frighten Algerians. I can say this: "Let those who contracted the debt pay it back." [quotation marks as published] But the debt is a haunting reality. It is being brandished for political gain. Contrary to all expectations, Algeria remains a credible country. It has the human and material potential to repay the debt several times over. But the debt remains a mechanism of intolerable pressure and it cries out for negotiations (however unpredictable). At the risk of being repetitive, I would say that the debt should be repaid by those who contracted it. Although, in looking at the numbers, it seems to me that Algeria has completely honored its debt that we would view as four years old (the public would see it as much older than that). Algeria has paid 9 billion dollars a year for three years just to service the debt, a total of 27 billion dollars. But have the citizens been informed that in reprofiling the debt, we will have to pay more, thereby weakening the spirit of national sovereignty? Debt restructuring, on the other hand, means only a political concession. The gap is of great interest, of course, to certain countries. How is that we do not even have one billion dollars for survival purposes? The creditor countries know more about what we have than we ourselves do. As for the devaluation of the dinar, there has been a de facto devaluation because new money is constantly being printed, resulting in a loss of purchasing power and Algerian citizens and companies are feeling the effects of it.

[Haberra] So, a change of government is needed. Since we are on that subject, Chadli's term of office is about to expire. Are you thinking ahead to the upcoming legislative and presidential elections?

[Amirat] It is imperative that the political crisis be solved. The solution is to create viable, sound institutions and to put an end to temporary arrangements.

The country's credibility is dependent upon an end to the crisis. The institutions must have a well-defined framework—a democratic republic that can define the terms of true social justice, very much in line with the ideals of November 1954. Our people fought long and hard for that and will never accept an Islamic republic in Algeria. The lesson of the elections on 26 December is evident, which is to say that the MDRA categorically rejected such schemes, particularly after the president's de facto resignation. We must place Algeria above all other considerations. Therefore, the political class must willingly agree to dialogue.

Democracy allows for the expression of opposing views. We must build such a system and recognize its blessings (not only freedom, but also the much-talked-about ability to elect new parties to power, as government must be the product of the people.) Let me take this opportunity to raise a question: Why don't we establish a code of ethics, with powers defined by the Constitution? Then, let us organize free and fair elections. However much time that would take, we would eventually achieve a democratic outcome.

[Haberra] Democracy? You must be joking! The assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf is still a murky affair. The investigating commission has already published its report, but do you think that the truth about his death will ever be learned?

[Amirat] I was waiting for that question, because the death of Mr. Boudiaf caused me great pain.

I have always said that the truth about President Boudiaf's assassination is a factor that will have a bearing on the government's credibility. In other words, no reason of state can justify suppressing the truth about his death. The investigating commission is only as good as its six members. The findings they have reached are unacceptable.

That is to say, it is a sham, although there is something familiar about it. However, the judicial authorities who investigated the case or the brief (whichever it is) are under obligation to bring the truth to light; otherwise, it would prove that the system has not changed at all. I will end by saying that the MDRA stands by the family of the late Mohamed Boudiaf.

RPN Reportedly Rejects Assassination Report
93AF0318B *Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French*
17 Dec 92 p 17

[Article by D.G.: "The Trap"]

[Text] "We reject the conclusions of the commission of inquiry into the assassination of President Boudiaf. Although the president of the HCE [Higher State Council] has thanked its members for their work, we do not think it

has carried out its mission. We reaffirm our support for the security forces in their battle against terrorism and urge the Algerian people to join us in defending the country against this scourge."

This was the main point to emerge during a press conference held yesterday by leading members of the RPN [National Patriotic Rally] standing committee including Messrs. Amine Benabderrahmane and Bisker. As expected, the press conference, coming at a time when the various bodies making up the RPN are racked by division, was marked by many questions concerning the reasons for the premature break-up of the Sidi-Fredj conference.

According to Mr. Amine Benabderrahmane, "the conference was a farce, orchestrated some time back by a certain party, which I will not name. At the time of the Sidi-Fredj conference, we were getting ready for a meeting between the RPN standing committee and the membership committee to prepare for the national conference. Certain leaders of that party obstructed the process to pave the way for election of a coordinator, although at no time during the preparations for the meeting was there any question of creating a directorate or coordinating body."

In an effort to put all this hubbub into context, our interlocutors noted that "RPN's project inspires fear, and people try to destroy it. Whenever we move to build up and fortify the RPN, we are faced with division."

"After the Harcha meeting, which was billed as a rally of all patriots to support the struggle against terrorism and demand the truth about the Boudiaf assassination, the HCE dumped the membership committee on us. At Sidi-Fredj, one party expelled us from the national coordination on the basis of an attendance list." RPN officials concluded they had "avoided another trap."

Discussing the national coordination meeting planned for 8 January in Tizi-Ouzou, Mr. Amine informed us he expects to participate, because "I am at my ease in any Algerian city. My complaint about the friends of the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy] is their tendency always to try to run everything."

As this point in the press conference, Mr. Bisker concluded in a solomonic vein that "the RPN is a school. It is hard to ask people to leave their caps at the door. Perhaps these problems will show Algerians that the RPN is not just the handiwork of the HCE. All those people will work together in the field, if they're sincere. I am optimistic."

Citizens React to Assassination Report

93AF0314B Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
13 Dec 92 p 2

[Article by A. Toumiat: "Citizens React; 'The People Must Be Told the Truth'"—first two paragraphs are LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text]

Man-on-the-Street's Reaction

The Bouchaib commission's report on President Mohamed Boudiaf's assassination, which has now been made public,

propels the case to the forefront of the public debate. The focus of all discussions at every street corner, in cafes, stadiums, and public places, the findings of the commission "in charge of getting right to the bottom" of the assassination of the late president, are inconclusive as to who may have ordered the assassination and hardly meet the citizens' expectations.

All the people we asked said that the Bouchaib commission just failed in its historical mission. The "reason of State" was even mentioned and challenged by citizens who saw the late Mohamed Boudiaf as Algeria's savior. Anyhow, the people are wondering why it took the commission so long to produce such an insignificant result.

Mr. Abdellah, 36, Sonelgaz [National Electricity and Gas Company] executive: "That is ridiculous. They kept us waiting all that time to tell us that the president was killed by Boumaarafi. We already knew that. The people still want to know who was behind it. Otherwise, our country will never recover. It will just compound the confidence crisis."

B. Karima, 24, [female] student, Algiers: "It's a shame for a country that talks about democracy and the State under the rule of the law. Boudiaf, may God have his soul, came back to Algeria to sacrifice himself, once again, for his country. And he paid for it with his life. His assassins will pay for their cowardice sooner or later. The people will judge them."

Mohamed Hansai, international referee: "I very much regret Boudiaf's death. He was committed to straighten out the country's difficult situation. The people deplore this loss. As a nationalist, I am moved when I consider the present situation of the country. I am nonpolitical, but I hope that the national investigation commission acted according to its conscience."

M. Mustapha, 30, El-Harrach: "Personally, I am losing hope. I expected a lot from the investigation commission. Today, I am disappointed."

K. Abdellah, 30, physician, Tipasa: "The theory of an individual acting alone is one possibility. The assassin at any rate confessed that he had acted on religious motivations. Besides, he is said to be a sympathizer of the former FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]. This is a possibility that cannot be ruled out for the moment. The justice department must continue its investigation, and then we shall see."

[Box, p 2]

'Mixed Reactions Among Intellectuals'

The investigation commission in charge of shedding light on President Boudiaf's assassination presented its final report. We asked a few personalities from various cultural horizons how they reacted to this report. Here are their answers:

Rachid Boudjedra (writer): "I cannot give a firm opinion on the report because I think that the commission has a mission and a responsibility. The commission looks honest to me, but its hypotheses are qualified. To accuse the FIS for the first time and implicate it is a first step. Everybody in Algeria knows who the real assassins are; let's not waste time on this. This new hypothesis is a working hypothesis for the

commission, not for us. All Algerian citizens believe that the political and financial mafia together with the FIS are behind the assassination. I expect that other investigations will lead to other conclusions."

Narrimane Zhor Sadouni (painter): "I have not read or seen any convincing result. The only material result is that Boudiaf was assassinated and that he will not come back!"

Reda Doumaz (chaabi singer): "I have followed the successive stages of the investigation and I believe that we should not have expected revelations. The result we have now is that the assassin acted alone, but that does not mean that the crime did not benefit third parties. Who are they?"

"Above all, I believe that public opinion will not expect more from the commission. We may have some strong reactions from genuine Boudiaf supporters. I consider that these results are base and frustrating."

Hamida Ait El-Hadj (producer): "In view of present conditions, and considering what Algeria is experiencing now, I think that it was commendable for the commission to have taken on such a task."

"Of course, we are not satisfied, knowing that someone murdered the man on whom we had pinned all our hopes. However, I was not expecting general conclusions, but names. Unfortunately, we did not learn anything new. Yet, such a case is something new in our history, to the extent that in the past politicians' assassinations were blamed on mad or deranged individuals, without any investigation or anything. For me, this commission's report should be the starting point for a new and more exhaustive investigation."

[Article by Djazia Gozim]

Assassination Report 'Nebulous,' 'Incomplete'

93AF0314C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
11-12 Dec 92 p 1

[Article by Abdelhamid Benzine: "Nebula"]

[Text] These are strange conclusions that were delivered by the honorable commission in charge of investigating the assassination of the chief of state, President Boudiaf. Listening to all the information and statements concerning this unspeakable crime, we end up wondering what it is all about.

What we were told could be summed up as follows: "The killer acted alone, although he was not alone, but alone all the same." What should we make of it?

Obviously, the regretful Mohamed Boudiaf disturbed and threatened the political and (ill-acquired) material interests of organized fundamentalism and what is rightfully called the political and financial mafia.

We all know it and, in other words, to say it is just to state the obvious. Fundamentalism and the mafia are in fact two formidable forces, powerfully and comfortably entrenched in the State apparatus, the economy, and the poorest districts of our cities. They are separate forces, albeit objective and sometimes subjectively partners in a sort of

criminal black marketeering that will rely on the shari'ah and free enterprise to go on plundering Algeria and debasing the Algerians.

"Always tell the people the truth, no matter what the consequences," said Boudiaf used to say. But what happened to "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"?

So far, after several months of efforts on the part of personalities whose integrity and patriotic commitment are not in question, we have only half-truths.

It is a half-truth to name in a theoretical and abstract manner the two above-mentioned forces who had an interest in the disappearance of Si Tayeb, the revolutionary.

In this respect, and going further, we can state that all present civil and military leaders who play any part in government represent choice targets for the regressive forces. Striving to ensure the citizens' safety, to rebuild a strong, democratic, and credible state, to win the confidence of the people—especially young people, the working classes, and the intellectuals—for such a state, is proving to be a dangerous undertaking, constantly threatened by "individuals acting alone" like Boumaraafi.

To make us believe that there was only one Boumaraafi—of sound mind—and serious instances of negligence in arranging for the president's safety, is to promote resignation, discouragement, or destabilizing actions.

It is to go counter to the just objectives officially enunciated by the HCE [Higher State Council] and the Abdesselam government.

To stop there amounts to saying that the individuals who were actually behind it are in the Andromeda nebula, millions of light years away from our earth.

They will tell us that it is now for the law to continue and complete the difficult task undertaken by the investigation commission. For the law to name the individuals who were actually involved in the murder of the Son of November [1954] and are still involved in a plot against the nation.

What should we do except trust in the law, which is disconcertingly prone to releasing active leaders of the former FIS, who now live abroad, and deals harshly with small delinquents who support their families? And the heck with those who talk about class justice!

But it is an ill wind that blows no good: among the people who took part in the December demonstrations, the awareness is growing that hope is born of struggles and new sacrifices. And "hope is a risk worth taking."

Press Reactions to Findings on Assassination

93AF0296F Algiers EL WATAN in French 12 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by F.M.: "Press: Ambiguities"]

[Text] The national press has taken differing views of the publication of the final conclusions of the report of the commission named to investigate the assassination of President Boudiaf. Despite clarifications issued by commission spokesman Rezag-Bara, the newspapers remain divided.

Under a banner reading "Not the End of the Mysteries," LE SOIR D'ALGERIE writes: "In its second report, the commission named to investigate the assassination of President Boudiaf has not progressed beyond the stage of 'the material author' of the 'assassination plan,' 2d Lt. Boumaarafi, even if it does not believe in the thesis of the isolated act, maintaining that an act of such gravity could only be a 'political crime.'" For its part, LE MATIN screams in red: "The Bouchaib Commission Concludes: Isolated Act." "The assassin's claim of an isolated act, which is intolerable and unacceptable to all seekers of the truth, cannot be validated by the Bouchaib Commission, whose conclusions we await and do not discredit (...). So far, Boudiaf's assassin has stymied everyone by sticking to his initial statements (...). In other words, is Boumaarafi the peerless actor in a tragedy with several actors and whose director will forever remain in the shadows, or is he an enlightened kamikaze?" the editorialist of the same newspaper asks. For his part, the editor of the daily LE JOURNAL thinks "the contradictions observed during Boumaarafi's hearings do not point to an isolated act and bring one back to the thesis of a premeditated crime, leading the commission to ask the classic question: Who benefited from the crime?" The same daily also points to the reaction of one Amine Benabderrahmane, RPN [National Patriotic Rally] coordinator, who said he was "puzzled and dismayed" by statements according to which "Boumaarafi acted alone in his attack on Boudiaf." In a brief, front-page commentary illustrated with a caricature, ALGER REPUBLICAIN returns to the Bouchaib Commission's conclusions and not without some criticism: "...the Commission's evasiveness and undocumented reports of its interviews with the public have prompted observers to conclude that many power centers or lobbies have interfered by successive pressure on the investigation...." Under the headline "The FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation] and Interest Groups," the daily LIBERTE finds that despite Boumaarafi's statement to the effect that he acted alone, the Commission has ruled out the thesis of an isolated act. "The assassination of any president in general and Boudiaf in particular can only be considered a political crime." The newspaper's report was actually a summary of a synthesis read by Rezag-Bara on television. EL KHABAR is the only Arabic-language newspaper to have commented, however briefly, on the publication of the first elements of the report. "Bara contributed nothing new," it writes under a headline reading "It is not an isolated act or a political crime." For EL KHABAR, the Commission tried to answer the question of who could profit from the crime by incriminating the former FIS.

The government press in general has not commented at length on the Bouchaib Commission's revelations. The daily evening newspaper HORIZONS writes: "It would be astonishing (...) if the Commission were to conclude that Boumaarafi acted alone. This would have the effect of destroying the entire series of revelations contained in the first report, but would in particular cause the Commission and therefore, official authorities, to lose all credibility...." For the newspaper, the Commission carried out its task "amidst total secrecy." EL MOUDJAHID and ESSALEM were content to print APS dispatches.

Brahimi on Rationale, Justification for Curfew
93AF0318A Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
9 Dec 92 p 3

[Article by APS: "Brahimi Says Curfew Not Synonymous with Restrictions"]

[Text] "The recently imposed security measures are a logical step in the context of the state's efforts to normalize the situation and put an end to acts of violence in Algeria," said Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi in an interview that appeared Monday in London in the newspaper EL-HAYAT.

Algeria's top diplomat noted that "the policy being implemented to that end is meant to combat terrorism in all its forms."

"We have never said this phenomenon will disappear," he added. "Quite the opposite: Violence will break out again, as government leader Belaid Abdesselam has said more than once, and the security forces are prepared to deal with it."

"The measures that have been taken," he continued, "are the next logical step and were expected to follow the first phase, notably the expiration of the deadline for those planning to turn themselves in."

To the question whether the curfew would raise tensions and excite further fear among the citizenry, Mr. Brahimi replied: "The curfew goes into force at 2230, a very late hour in winter, which makes the job of the security services easier. This is why it is not synonymous with restrictions," he added.

"It is a routine security operation that in no way signifies the government has failed or the situation has deteriorated."

In discussing the security situation, Mr. Brahimi spoke "of the existence of terrorist groups targeting both citizens and their property." The security services are convinced that these actions, despite their seriousness and the inconvenience they cause the citizenry, will not prevent security from being restored, he noted.

Stop the Decline

The other important point, according to Algeria's top diplomat, is that "these acts are the work of small groups that commit them in specific parts of the country."

"I do not think it is a popular movement, and my hope is that they will be first isolated and then gradually eradicated," Mr. Brahimi added. In that context, he said, Algeria has never denied there is a real social crisis in the country, one which has economic and social as well as political dimensions.

In response to a question about reaction from economic experts around the world who say the new Algerian Government has taken no innovative steps to improve the economy, Mr. Brahimi said "Algerian authorities do not consider it their job to innovate at the behest of outsiders. This applies both to the government of former prime minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali and to the current government headed by Mr. Belaid Abdesselam. Any new steps taken by the government will be for the Algerian people, not for

anyone else. What matters is what the people think. On that score, public reaction to Mr. Belaid Abdesselam's statements is altogether satisfactory."

Mr. Brahimi added that Mr. Abdesselam has said on many occasions that Algeria's problems cannot be solved in a day. "Quite the opposite: As he has always maintained, we must first stop the decline before we can begin gradually working our way out of the recession. But at least people now feel there is movement in terms of concrete action."

Priority to Recovery

Questioned about scattered indications Mr. Abdesselam may move back towards a managed economy and away from the openness and liberalization of recent years, the minister said the whole world now realizes the socialist experiment was a shameful failure.

Algerians understand perfectly well their economy must eventually get back in step with the global economy. The question is how to move to that stage while country is still in the throes of recession.

"As for ourselves," the minister added, "we could only approve the plan adopted by the head of government, which includes some cautious conservative measures and is itself a major step toward the country's economic recovery. People feel that action is being taken and that efforts are being made to extricate our economy from the difficult situation we face. Mr. Belaid Abdesselam has indicated it will take three to five years to do it."

Discussing Algero-Iranian relations, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi said Iran is "a great and important country with which we used to maintain a serious dialogue. In recent times, the Iranians have adopted positions, made statements, and taken actions that, as we warned them, are not in their interest."

Accordingly, said the minister, Algeria has recalled its ambassador and downgraded relations to a symbolic level.

"The current level accurately reflects the state of relations. There is no more dialogue between us, and we hope Iran's leaders will realize that this path will not get them any positive results."

Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi also said Iran "wants badly to play an important role in the region and in the world." He noted that "Algeria's decision to downgrade ties to Iran started many people asking questions—something that is not in Iran's best interests—because it is well-known that Algeria seldom breaks off ties or increases tensions with other countries." Algeria, he went on, hopes Iran will support relations based on responsible attitudes, mutual respect, and the principle of noninterference.

According to the foreign minister, "there is considerable evidence, including statements of Iranian leaders, that these positions emanate from religious leaders. These same officials say they do not feel committed by those positions."

"There is also evidence that Iran does not respect the rules of the diplomatic game or the principles of international relations," he said, expressing hope "that the Iranian state

will realize the nonproductiveness of this policy and that things will gradually get back on track."

Train Travelers Caught in Curfew

93AF0275E Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
4-5 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by N.K.: "Travelers Spend Night at Train Station"]

[Text] Passengers boarding the train to Algiers at Blida station Saturday evening at 1900 scarcely suspected they would end up spending the first night of the curfew...inside a train.

The train (No. 1054 in railway jargon) had come from El-Afroun and was supposed to reach the "terminus" at 2035, about two hours before the curfew entered in force. But it failed to arrive until 2315.

According to the station master at Agha, the three-hour delay was due to a mechanical breakdown of the locomotive near Birtouta. Because of the curfew, it was not allowed to leave the station again.

According to the station master, railway employees on duty at that hour met with security officials to inquire what could be done in such cases. He said that police arriving on the scene escorted to their homes those travelers (mostly families) whose domiciles were in the vicinity of the train station.

The others spent Saturday night in a train put at their disposal by night-shift employees of SNTF [National Railway Transport Company]. Police patrolled the area to ensure their security.

These "unlucky travelers" nevertheless had a sleepless night. They also had harsh words for the railroad and most of all wondered what their respective families could be thinking.

In truth, the families must have been quite anxious over their unexplained absence on this first night of the curfew.

According to the station master, train schedules have been revised to comply with the curfew. For example, night trains to Oran and Tunis henceforth will leave at 1930, in order to be out of the curfew zone before 2230.

But SNTF officials should give further thought to the incident on the El-Afroun train (No. 1054). A way needs to be found to alleviate the consequences of unforeseen mechanical breakdowns and delays. At any rate, the "unlucky travelers" on No. 1054 have learned their lesson. All night long they swore that from now on they would "slip out" early from work to avoid any unpleasantness.

Curfew: Citizens Fear 'Terrorists' Move to Oran

93AF0296A Algiers EL WATAN in French 17 Dec 92 p 2

[Article by J. Loukil: "Oran: Not Concerned, But...."]

[Text] Seven wilayas under curfew.

Oran—A week after the curfew was ordered in the central region of the country and even though it is not directly

concerned or hindered by it, the western capital seems to be adopting a more restrained lifestyle.

It is a fact that Oran and its region have not experienced the violence and anguish raging in the Algerian region, even if a number of incidents (isolated attacks on gendarmes and policemen) instigated by elements of the MIA [Armed Islamic Movement] have taken place in the wilaya. Nevertheless, it is all new to the people of Oran.

By 2000 in the evening, most merchants on the main streets downtown have already closed their curtains. Only a few cafes and restaurants remain open and even they are not really crowded. At the housing compounds and in the peripheral districts, one can always find grocery stores ready to serve late customers or persons making emergency purchases, even after nightfall.

The onset of winter scarcely encourages anyone to venture out late. Young people stay at home, shut in by the cold, bitter wind. Furthermore, the highly visible presence of armed law enforcement officers and their frequent inspections remind Oran residents that they are not living in a peaceful period. Danger could surface at any time and from any corner. Although less systematically than in wilayas in the central region, perhaps, the streets are empty by 2200.

Everyone we approached to ask their opinions or impressions about the curfew or security in general clearly evidenced a feeling of discomfort, even a certain fear. The elderly are forced to confront painful memories and in a sigh express regret that their country should have reached such a point. One mother fears that armed groups will seek refuge in the region and that Oran will end up like Algiers. It is a feeling shared by many. In contrast, others lend little credit to such an analysis, observing that the western region's topography does not provide safe refuge for potential fugitives.

Those hit hardest by the curfew are haulers who generally travel at night, merchants, and businessmen. Air Algeria, the SNTF [National Railway Transport Company], and SNTV [National Passenger Transport Company] have worked out new schedules for those who mainly use the very busy Oran-Algiers highway. Many Oran manufacturers have been on Algiers time for a week, and it is a safe bet that commercial and economic activities will go into a slump.

Impact of Curfew; Effectiveness Discussed

93AF0296C *Algiers EL WATAN in French* 20 Dec 92 p 14

[Article by D. Karimou: "Bejaia: "It Is Already Part of the Daily Routine"]

[Text] Bejaia—Seven wilayas in the country's central region have been under a curfew since 5 December. How do the citizens of Bejaia view the measure?

To be more specific, what is their opinion of it? These are the questions that guided us as we moved about the streets of this city.

After hearing "Oh yes, the curfew!" from the individuals whom we approached, we realized that the situation in the seven wilayas is not (or is no longer) the main topic of conversation around tables in the ever-crowded cafes or of the little groups constantly forming in public squares.

"Why would you expect us to talk about it when it (the curfew) is now part of the daily routine?" Malek asked with a sly smile. "Algerians have no night life, so this measure changes nothing—or very little—in the habits of residents of the wilayas affected," he added.

"Actually, the initiation of the curfew has been followed by other events such as the report of the investigative commission on Boudiaf's assassination, the Hollywood landing of American GI's in Somalia, and the difficulties of everyday life. All of this saturates the news, making the curfew already seem remote," Halim declared.

Ahmed, a beekeeper we met at Place Gueydou, says the measure is an annoyance for residents of the wilayas. One has but to think of the problems faced by the family or close associates of a person falling ill and in need of urgent care elsewhere.

Even those not living in the wilayas are affected, he continues, because traveling to them is limited. "For example, merchants who obtain supplies from or deliver goods to the seven wilayas are forced to take measures. They cannot avoid it because the central region is the country's driving force, commercially speaking."

Nevertheless, it is the scope of the measure and its effects on which many persons with whom we spoke focus. Athmane, for example, does not think the curfew will help the situation. "This measure will not wipe out terrorism," he tells us, "nor do the terrorists confine their activities to the territories of the seven wilayas. Furthermore, the full details and impact of the lack of security are not clear."

For philosophy professor Mohamed, "the initiation of the curfew just days before the presentation of the report by the Commission of the Six is no accident." As the year draws to a close, Ali, a SONELGAZ [National Electricity and Gas Company] official, regrets that his fellow citizens in the central wilayas cannot celebrate the New Year like everyone else. "People will just have to grow older at home!" adds Hamou, a manager.

The word "democracy" is tending to disappear from the lips of Algerians. "This is unfortunate and, based on current events, I have no doubt that the curfew will be extended to the entire country," head of household Hamid tells us in a sorrowful, heavyhearted tone.

IMF Visit: Pace of Decisionmaking Questioned

93AF0344C Algiers LIBERTE in French 3 Jan 93 p 2

[Article by Idir Benyounes: "The IMF General Director Left Algiers: 'We Must Act Quickly'"; first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] The IMF general director left Algiers yesterday after a two and a half day visit. There was no agreement or negotiation, just a preliminary meeting of Camdessus with Belaid Abdesselam.

The IMF general director's visit was more like an "inspection" of the state of Algeria following Abdesselam's coming to power; above all, it showed a desire to be informed concerning the prime minister's future moves.

In this sense, Mr. Camdessus came to confirm whether the IMF and the Abdesselam government had the same analytical grid and wanted to reach the same objectives. That leaves the means to achieve these objectives. The IMF general director seems confident as to Algeria's potential. The main objective to be reached is a possible growth rate of 6 percent, job preservation, and a social safety net for the poorest. To achieve this, Mr. Camdessus is convinced that a cultural change is necessary to provide impetus for economic mechanisms and encourage operators to change over to a market economy.

Nevertheless, the IMF remains firm on questions that it deems important. This is the case, for instance, of the need for a strict management of the economic apparatus and the implementation of the dinar convertibility consistent with

price levels. The convertibility rate, according to Mr. Camdessus, must be set by the market. The IMF general director's visit was expected, all the more so as Algeria finds itself in a critical financial situation.

As for the \$400-million "standby" credit, Mr. Camdessus maintained that it is just a possible "incentive" for Algeria's short-term efforts. From the point of view of a three- to four-year program, of an executive [sic], the IMF general director would favor the "enlarged facility" method. In this case, we are talking about \$1 billion, subject to the country's being solvent and to prior IMF approval.

Mr. Camdessus seemed to understand the measures adopted by the government, but appeared concerned about the impetus imparted. This is why he displayed optimism that "good passage points" could be found, while insisting on the urgent need to "act quickly."

Trade Figures From 1989-92 Reported

93AF0344A Algiers EL WATAN in French 29 Dec 92 p 7

[Second and final installment of an article by Abdeslam Daouzli: "Foreign Trade: Trends Confirmed"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] During the past three years, Algerian trade continued along the usual lines.

Table 5 shows that imports from four countries—France, Italy, United States, Germany—increased faster during the first half of 1992 than during the same period in 1991, both in absolute and relative value.

Table 5. Imports From the 10 Leading Suppliers
(millions of dinars)

Country	1989	1990	1991	First Half of 1992	Percent in 1992
France	12,159	20,146	29,541	20,250	21.9
Italy	9,292	10,788	18,127	15,295	17.2
United States	8,399	10,041	14,236	10,655	11.5
Germany	6,765	9,344	13,996	8,711	9.4
Spain	2,807	4,760	12,065	6,268	6.8
Japan	2,640	4,013	6,923	4,290	4.6
Belgium	2,202	3,196	4,642	2,808	3.0
Canada	2,474	2,833	3,722	1,732	1.9
Turkey	1,233	2,024	5,509	2,091	2.3
Austria	1,505	1,342	2,246	1,629	1.8

These same countries, plus Spain, accounted for 66.8 percent of all Algerian imports during the first half of 1992.

In simpler terms, this means that, for every \$3 spent by Algeria, \$2 go to these five countries.

4. Algeria's Clients

Table 6 shows that Algeria's six leading clients—i.e., countries buying Algerian oil and gas—remained the same from 1989 to 1992.

In fact, at the head of the list we find France, the United States, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium; the ranking is thus the same as for Algeria's suppliers, except that Japan yielded its sixth place to Belgium.

Note also that two of Algeria's 15 leading clients dropped out of the list during the first half of 1992; these are Tunisia, which ranked 13th in 1991, and Iran, which ranked 15th.

On the other hand, other countries joined the group of leading exporters, namely South Korea (14th) and Sweden (15th).

Table 6. Ranking of Countries by Export Volume

	1989	1990	1991	First Half of 1992
France	3	3	1	2
United States	2	2	2	3
Italy	1	1	3	1
Netherlands	4	4	4	6
Spain	6	6	5	5
Belgium	5	5	6	4
Great Britain	14	7	7	11
Germany	7	8	8	7
Austria	8	9	9	9
Portugal	10	10	10	12
Brazil	9	13	11	8
USSR/CIS ¹	13	14	12	10
Tunisia	-	-	13	-
Japan	-	-	14	13
Iran	-	-	15	-
South Korea	-	-	-	14
Sweden	-	-	-	15

1. Commonwealth of Independent States

Foreign Trade Breakdown by World Economic Zone

Table 7 shows that 91 percent of Algeria's foreign trade takes place with EEC and OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries.

Trade with Maghreb countries accounts for less than 2 percent; trade with Arab countries for less than 0.5 percent.

Trade with African countries, which did not exceed 0.5 percent in 1991, amounted to 0.1 percent during the first half of 1992.

As for Latin America, Asia and former East Bloc countries, they each account for 1.5 to 2.5 percent.

Table 7. Trade Volume By Economic Zone in 1991 and 1992 (First Half)

1991				First Half of 1992		
Millions of Dinars	Imports	Exports	Percent of Trade	Imports	Exports	Percent of Trade
Arab Maghreb Union	3,056	3,489	1.9	2,376	1,848	1.9
Arab Countries	735	599	0.4	872	41	0.4
African Countries	1,298	319	0.5	228	38	0.1
EEC	84,575	140,443	65.8	57,556	92,726	69.1
OECD	39,732	47,003	25.4	24,286	23,267	21.9
Other European Countries	3,022	3,872	2.0	1,231	3,044	2.0
Latin America	3,908	5,178	2.7	2,876	2,810	2.6
Asia	2,917	1,963	1.4	2,985	1,388	2.0
Grand Total	139,243	202,866	100	92,350	125,162	100

In conclusion, we shall say that this configuration of the Algerian foreign trade has a structural origin, i.e., it will not change much except in the long term, and only if a voluntary diversification of our exports takes place. Only by diversifying the products offered for export can we achieve an expansion of our "clients range."

But this is the subject of another debate that we shall open another time.

Trade Laws Said Encumbering Foreign Firms

93AF0345A Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
30 Dec 92 p 2

[Article by Brahim Tahi: "Trade Register of Mixed Companies: A Veritable Obstacle Course"; first paragraph is LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] Partnerships are one of the solutions considered by the government to face up to the economic crisis that is

rocking Algeria. Seminars are organized almost everywhere to explain the ins and outs of partnerships, and mostly to reassure foreign partners as to the "facilities" granted to them by the State to create mixed companies in Algeria.

In view of present conditions, many foreign partners hesitate to come and invest in Algeria. The Italians are the only ones who have extensively played, and are still playing, the partnership card, irrespective of political and economic vicissitudes. Yet, the problems confronting mixed companies are not political or economic; rather—listen to this—they are the result of a simple registration problem at the National Trade Register Center (CNRC).

Just getting this document amounts to achieving the impossible: some mixed companies, such as SOMAPE (a mixed Algerian-Italian company specializing in concrete, with headquarters in Baraki), had to wait over one year and a half before the CNRC condescended to issue the trade registration. Compared with that, any black marketeer wishing to "go legal" by creating an import-export company can get the same document in record time, hardly more than eight days.

Because of this, many mixed Algerian-Italian companies created over six months ago are still patiently waiting for the precious document to be issued to them. Meanwhile, much water will have flowed under the bridge. For instance, many contracts are ready to be signed, but without a trade register number the companies involved cannot receive the 30 percent of the amounts provided for under the contracts, not to mention salaries and rents that endanger the future of these mixed companies and delay vital projects on a national scale.

Why, then, give such a hard time to mixed companies and make them go through a veritable obstacle course to get their trade register numbers?

As you know, mixed companies are managed jointly by Algerian and foreign directors. Before a trade register number is issued, foreign directors must comply with the mandatory requirement of residing in Algeria. In order to obtain a residence permit, they must have a work contract with an Algerian company or institution.

This principle was imposed by the 1966 order concerning foreigners and the 1975 decree; it was clarified by the interministerial order of 1977. Under the latter order, the tradesman's card can be issued only if the foreigner resides in Algeria.

Unwieldy Legislation

All these laws and regulations go counter to the opening of the economy and the incentives given to foreign capital investments. They ought to be repealed so our zealous bureaucrats could no longer invoke them, or take refuge behind these obsolete provisions that conflict with the economic reforms undertaken.

This being said, the many mixed companies already created, but still without any trade register number, declined to comment for fear of retaliation. For instance, the chief

executive officer of Fiat does not wish to see the problem discussed in the media, as it is part of "Algeria's internal affairs."

For its part, the CNRC categorically denied the existence of a gridlock or abuses in issuing trade register numbers to mixed companies.

Mr. Haif Si Haif, the CNRC technical director, explained that "issuance of a trade register number is subject to a procedure defined in legal texts. Our role is to apply all laws currently in force. To obtain a trade register number, the application must include proof of the headquarters location, the company's charter drawn up by a notary, administrative documents (birth certificates, criminal record, etc), and finally the fee to be paid. As far as mixed companies are concerned, in addition to the above-mentioned documents, approval of the Council on Currency and Credit is required." Actually, things are not that simple.

However, a director is, by definition, an individual that is not expected to work full time. His presence is required from time to time.

To expect him to move his entire family and take up permanent residence in Algeria just to obtain a trade register number, that is a legal aberration, which our august CCN [National Consultative Council] must absolutely investigate.

The CNRC technical director indicated that "the problems encountered by foreign partners are not inherent to the trade registration of mixed companies, but rather to the laws and regulations concerning foreigners, in this case Law 90-22.

"Therefore, the CNRC cannot be blamed for problems that have to do with other administrative structures."

What is paradoxical, however, is that the Oran trade register delegation issued these documents to mixed companies headquartered in Arzew without any problem and within a reasonable time.

These mixed companies included ELIOS (Sonatrach [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons]/Air Product) and SAFIR (Sonatrach, Sonelgaz [National Electricity and Gas Company], and the French Gas Company).

However, all the problems encountered by mixed companies when applying for a trade register number will be ironed out when the new code of commerce is adopted as expected next January.

Meanwhile, mixed companies should arm themselves with patience and hope...

Application of Multiple Exchange Rate Discussed 93AF0323A Algiers LIBERTE in French 29 Dec 92 p 10

[Article by L. Benani: "The Multiple Exchange Rate: An Alternative, But...."]

[Text] *Would application of the multiple exchange rate in a disastrous financial situation be profitable?*

According to certain reliable sources, the multiple exchange rate outlined in Belaid Abdesselam's program would be a four-tiered rate.

Some say the choice would be a way to enable the government to "control" foreign trade and make essential products available to consumers at affordable prices. In a sense, Abdesselam wants to maintain government subsidies for certain sectors and in order to do so, sets a rate of 3 dinars/1 [FF] French franc for drugs and other strategic products so as to reduce consumer prices and inflation. For commercial transactions linked to financing by the Bank of Algeria, the official exchange rate would be 4.2 DA [Algerian dinars] to 1 FF and 7 DA to 1 franc for exports that would help increase oil taxes (budget resources).

The fourth rate would be a free market rate of 10 dinars to 1 FF, a rate that would enable the government to absorb the liquidities of the parallel market and private operators to obtain foreign exchange. A preferential rate would be worked out for emigrants. If approved, the four exchange rates would certainly respond to the country's social problems without thereby settling current economic problems. Would their application not be a false way out?

First of all, would Algeria, which barely managed to persuade its financial backers—the IMF in particular—to reschedule its foreign debt, have the arguments it needs to persuade it to approve the application of several rates of exchange?

It should be recalled that it was difficult to convince the institution in question of two and only two rates! The first will be official and the second free.

In addition, its consent was based on the need to ensure that the official rate matches the free market rate by the convertibility of the dinar into the national currency in three years.

Second, would the application of several exchange rates not be a corollary of the continuation of government subsidies and its control of foreign trade? The two "tools": subsidies and control of foreign trade, are contrary to IMF principles and run counter to the market economy.

Third, the planned rates will certainly have very sharp inflationary effects, even if they do fill Treasury coffers.

Fourth, the success of the free foreign exchange market depends upon the concrete participation of the Bank of Algeria. Will the latter have the courage and specifically the financial means (foreign exchange liquidity) to inject them into a risky market?

By way of example, with an existing rate of 1,000 DA/1 franc, we would have to have a minimum of 100 million FF available to make such a market official. Otherwise, other problems could arise. A surge in foreign exchange and the depreciation of the dinar would be inevitable. Even our emigres, who actually stand to benefit far more by supplying the "informal" market, inject their money elsewhere, without mentioning the deficiencies of our banking system.

The government in power has put its finger on the source of the trouble affecting the country's monetary management.

The monetaristic policy recommended by the Hamrouche government and continued by the Ghazali administration has had major aftereffects.

Backed by a law on currency and credit essentially promulgated to serve a specific ideology, both governments could surely not have anticipated the damage that has ensued. The failure to control the monetary mass, which has exceeded 30 percent, and devaluation of the dinar, amounting to some 418 percent, are but two illustrations among many others.

Production Capacity, Security at Skikda Refinery

93AF0315D *Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French*
24 Nov 92 p 10

[Article by A. Boudrouma: "A Model of Good Organization"]

[Text] Since it began production in 1980, the Skikda refinery has been one of the largest installations in the Skikda industrial zone, known as "the petrochemical platform" and it plays a leading role among all the other installations there.

The jewel of the petroleum industry and an important component of Algeria's economic strategy, the refinery is a source of pride for the country, "to be regarded as one of our most cherished possessions," as the former energy minister said during a visit. It handles an average of 15 million metric tons of crude oil per year (from Algeria's Hassi Messaoud field) and 273,000 metric tons of imported reduced crude. Refining operations yield 15 different products, including propane, butane, regular and premium gasolines, benzene, toluene, jet A-1 (kerosene), and continuing all the way to paving asphalts and oxidized asphalts. Eighty percent of the refinery's output is exported and the remaining 20 percent supplies the domestic market. According to its director, Mr. Cherouana, the refinery usually meets its goals, which indicates a solid mastery of the facility's production processes. By 1988, it can be noted, Algerian managers had replaced all foreign technical assistants, following a program of both on-site and classroom training.

Among the management team's foremost concerns, the safety of the installations and personnel is paramount because a refinery's furnaces burn continuously 24 hours a day. Mr. Cherouana noted that the installation he directs is organized as dictated by the requirements of work involving continuous heat sources and by the safe operation of production equipment. The refinery consists of three functions: its basic function, which is production, the support function (maintenance and administration), and the monitoring function that involves the technical, security, and financial sections. This means that safety is the concern of the entire installation.

Working with liquid or gaseous hydrocarbons in the presence of a continuous source of heat (furnaces and other heat sources) presents certain risks. Consequently, an organizational plan must be strictly adhered to and personnel must be trained if the installation is to operate as safely as possible. Mr. Cherouana remarked that the refinery has always made certain that the employees who operate its

equipment have the necessary skills and rigorously comply with operational guidelines. In addition, the refinery has a policy of preventive maintenance by which equipment is maintained in accordance with the supplier's guidelines in order to prevent an accidental breakdown and minimize risks. The technical department plays an important role in monitoring equipment performance with emphasis on operating standards, compliance with retesting requirements, and obligatory periodic inspections. The security department is responsible for surveillance, prevention, and emergency interventions. It monitors all supplies and personnel entering the refinery, which is divided into areas monitored by a prevention inspector who enforces safety procedures. It is also the only department authorized to issue work permits: cold-temperature tasks, hot-temperature tasks (arc welding, searches, and entry passes. [punctuation as published])

In addition, there is a division specialized in putting out hydrocarbon fires. Its 60 employees have at their disposal 10 trucks as well as the installation's permanent fixtures (two 20,000-cubic-meter tanks and six pumps) and the fire-fighting system, which covers the entire installation, including the administrative area (200 hectares). Should outside assistance be required, the refinery can rely on the Emergency Intervention Force, which is part of the ZIK [expansion not given].

The division holds monthly drills and the civil protection service takes part in drills every six months. Employees are examined at least once a year by the occupational medicine division and certain jobs require more frequent check-ups. An infirmary and two ambulances are available 24 hours a day.

"The combined efforts of all the departments and their employees enable us to function efficiently and safely and we hope to keep up our current level of performance, the average achieved over the last decade," said Mr. Cherouana. We asked him how safe the Skikda refinery is, particularly in view of the recent incident at a French oil refinery, and whether we are any more or less safe than a country that is more technologically advanced. Mr. Cherouana replied: "You know, we strive to reduce risks as much as possible with the aim of eliminating them; we do the best we can but we cannot predict incidents of that kind. So, a bit of superstition cannot hurt—let's knock on wood."

Large Numbers Respond to National Strike

93AF0275A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
7 Dec 92 p 3

[Text of open letter by Abdelmadjid Sidi-Said, acting secretary general of the National Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA): "Central Salutes Worker Solidarity"]

[Text] By responding in great numbers, in a completely disciplined and responsible way, to the UGTA's [National Union of Algerian Workers] appeal for a 15-minute work stoppage on Sunday 6 December 1992—it is estimated that more than 85 percent honored the stoppage at 1630—millions of men and women working in every sector of activity and their union representatives once again showed

the unity, solidarity, strength, and immense mobilization capabilities on which they can call whenever circumstances demand it.

The total success of this national trade-union action gives proof of labor's absolute loyalty to its syndicate under the leadership of Brother Abdelhak Benhamouda.

Workers responded to the cunning tactics of UGTA's detractors by demonstrating their commitment to bar the road to any who would destabilize the country and create disorder and anarchy by means of terrorist action or economic sabotage. Likewise they renewed their determination to persevere in the struggle for social justice and respect for the dignity of the laborer and against those who have ruined the nation's economy.

On this day too Algerian workers renewed their oath before history to continue to be the vanguard defending the nation's unity, honor, and dignity.

On this historic day, the national secretariat of the UGTA expresses its deep thanks and high esteem to all Algerian workers and their representatives for having once again risen to the challenge.

For the national secretariat, the secretary general ad interim, Abdelmadjid Sidi-Said.

Shortcomings of Investment Code Discussed

93AF0296D Algiers EL WATAN in French 13 Dec 92 p 14

[Article by Maamar Boudersa: "Investment Code: Legal Holes and Ambiguities"]

[Text] The government program apparently seeks to stimulate all investment activities by drafting a suitable code. However, the program now being worked out suffers from a certain legal distortion of this stated political aim.

"The only radical remedy to the crises of confidence affecting modern economic life would be to limit the individual's choice to the sole alternative of spending his income or using it to manufacture that item of real capital which, even on the basis of uncertain information, seems to him to be the most attractive investment available to him."

Belaid Abdesselam's government seems to have assimilated this solution recommended by famous English economist John Maynard Keynes in his historic work "The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money." The government program expressing its political purpose seeks to stimulate all investment activity, whether direct or indirect, public or private, national or foreign, in all sectors of economic and social life.

Priority sectors (agriculture, irrigation, land development, building, energy, industry, economic integration, tourism, handicrafts, health, export sectors, and so on) have been defined and the initial advantages (preferential exchange rates, tax incentives, and so on) promised.

By going this far in outlining its investment policy, Abdesselam's government has adopted a firm option for a true liberalization of the national economy once it is back on its feet and has been reorganized.

In order to carry out its liberalization policy, the government has pledged to draft an investment code defining the general rules used to implement and guarantee them.

The code will be but a legislative and legal extension of a clearly stated political purpose.

Through such an option, the Abdesselam government has implicitly recognized that Laws 82-13 and 86-13 on indirect foreign investments, 88-25 on national private investments, and 90-10 on currency and credit and the legalization of direct foreign investments, are ineffective and poorly adapted to the movement of capital or any development of the contemporary world economy. The results are there for all to see and quite explicit. Consequently, the policy of a break with the one followed by its predecessors has been defined at length in its program.

The investment code had only to be promulgated in order to be carried out in actual fact, particularly since potential investors, both national and foreign, are impatiently awaiting it to make their decisions.

The code will shape the future trend of the national economy. The program currently being worked out leads to a number of observations.

To start with, one must state that the proposed investment code does not set an ambitious objective, that of restoring the balance of payments. It is intended rather as a code governing investments in areas relating to actual material production. The sectors of health, advanced training, publishing, agriculture, insurance and banking seem to have been completely ignored. Nevertheless, all of these sectors have contributed, each in its own way, to the foreign debt.

This being the case, one must note that the proposed investment code is characterized by its blend and confusion, in addition to legal obstacles placed in the path of potential investors and constituting a veritable mine field in which there will be very few winners. Actually, the blend and confusion begin with the very first article defining the law's purpose and continue as far as Article 3 defining the concept of "investment" and the legal classification of "investors," to name but two. The bill (in its Article 3) recognizes the right of "residents" and "nonresidents" to invest, while Article 1 is completely silent on the matter.

These legal categories of "resident" and "nonresident" are not new in Algeria. Law 90-10 on currency and credit defines them in Articles 181 and 182. Regulation 90-03 on their application provides additional clarification.

The legal formulation used by the Hamrouche government expressed the political determination to legalize the laundering and recycling of funds stemming from corruption and misappropriation.

"Let those who have accumulated money improperly at least have the decency to invest it so that the country may confront its most urgent social problems," he said on Channel 3's program "Transparency" in May 1990.

ENOR Plans Mining Minerals at Hoggar

93AF0275C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
25 Nov 92 pp 1, 3

[Article by B. Rouache: "ENOR Gold Rush at Hoggar"]

[Text] Nearly 57,000 kg of gold is "waiting" patiently in the ground in Algeria. Will there be a gold rush at Hoggar someday? ENOR [Gold Mine Operating Company] is preparing for it.

Algeria is potentially rich in subsurface mineral resources. Ordinary citizens are convinced of it. But even where prospecting is successful, exploitation is poorly managed or simply abandoned outright, often without good reason.

The hydrocarbon sector on which our whole economy depends is similarly handicapped. In his most recent statement on ENTV, Mr. Belaid Abdesselam has said that profits from hydrocarbon exploitation should be 30 percent higher than they are.

So, "what's this about plans for gold mining?" Mr. Briki, ENOR's general manager, ventures a response. "Two gold mines have been discovered on the Hoggar massif: Tirek and Amesmessa, which are separated from each other by a distance of about 60 km. Their reserves of metallic gold are estimated at 57,000 kg." Then, with the conviction of an executive who is determined to succeed at all costs in his mission, he adds: "We will begin mining operations in 1993. Production in this first phase should be about 1,000 kg of gold per year. When we embark on the second phase in 1996, we predict production of 2,700 to 3,000 kg of gold per year."

We have also learned that the first deposit, "Tirek," was discovered in the 1970s by SONAREM [National Prospecting and Mine Exploitation Company]. The second, "Amesmessa," was discovered in 1991 by EREM [National Mineral Prospecting Enterprise].

According to the ENOR executive, "studies were conducted in 1985 by Mine Development Enterprise (EDEMINES) and later by Non-Ferrous Products Enterprise (ENOF)."

This project was never completed, due to changes in procedures for financing industrial projects. According to Mr. Briki, it was only after prefeasibility studies done in cooperation with SIDAM [expansion not given] (Canada) and SIDEM [expansion not given] (Algeria) that the decision was made in January 1992 to establish ENOR.

To get more information on the geological surveys, we contacted Mr. Touahri, director general of the National Office of Geologic Studies (ORGM), who told us about the activities of his office, its mission, and the important deposits discovered.

"Our agency was created in January 1992," he told us, "to replace EREM and the National Geology Office (DNIG).

"Our principal mission is the study and evaluation of nonhydrocarbon mineral resources. We conduct two kinds of studies: one to find new deposits, the other to augment reserves at already existing deposits."

Asked whether Algeria is a wealthy country, he answers, with the air of a man who knows his subject well: "We have enormous subsurface reserves. We have prepared close to 3,000 geologic reports on our surveys; these reports constitute our basic patrimony for future growth of the mining industry. The geographic cartography is already in place. These maps cover almost half the country's territory. The remainder is in the south, which is mostly of concern to the petroleum sector."

There have been several discoveries of economically profitable deposits, he says, including deposits of useful nonmetallic substances mined in quarries. These products can serve as building materials and have uses in the ceramics, chemicals, and window-glass industries.

However, no deposits of mercury have been exploited anywhere but the Azzaba complex.

According to the director general of ORGM, heavy investments are required to mine solid minerals such as the copper, lead, and zinc in the south, because of unusually difficult geographic conditions at the sites. This is not the case in northern Algeria, which has a long history of mining activity: Several small and medium-sized deposits have been mined to exhaustion, such as the iron mine at Zaccar and mines at Timezrit, Sidi Kamber, and Ain-Barbar.

There is of course the partnership option, which could spur exploration. This has been made possible by the 6 December 1991 law on mining activity. The ORGM director general did not hide the fact that contacts with resident and nonresident investors are taking place to acquaint them with opportunities for partnership, especially in zinc, lead, and gold. Moreover, Hoggar has not yet revealed all its treasures. ENOR today is getting ready for a gold rush on this fabulous plateau in southern Algeria.

Major Deposits

The largest exploitable deposits discovered during the last decade are:

- Oued-Amizour (Bejaia): geologic reserves estimated at 100 million tons of ore with 7-percent zinc content;
- Tahert (Jijel): reserves of 4 million tons of ore that contains a 5-percent concentration of lead and zinc, plus 100 grams per ton of silver;
- Tirek/Amesmessa (Hoggar): 57,000 kg of metallic gold reserves;
- Discovery of pozzolana (rock used in light cement);
- Mining operations at the china clay complex at Tamazert (Bejaia);
- Mining of the zinc deposit at Ain-Azel (Setif);
- Augmentation of phosphate reserves at Bir El-Atter (Tebessa), iron reserves at Ouenza, and marble reserves at Skikda.

Report on Two-Year Program To Create Jobs

93AF0315B Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French
20 Dec 92 p 5

[Article by Nabila Azzi: "Slim Results"—first paragraph is LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] A crucial problem in a society in crisis, employment for young people—or more exactly, the creation of jobs—has been severely undermined by the nationwide recession in Algeria. Whether in the east, center, west, or south, unemployment now affects a large proportion of 18- to 25-year-olds who lack either the information or training they need in order to enter the work world.

Algiers—For the past two years, the emphasis has been on entry into the work world, as witnessed by programs undertaken at the highest level. The DIPJ [Occupational Entry Program for Young People] is but one example of a policy to help young people with employable skills to enter the job market. The program was to facilitate hiring and the potential creation of jobs. In 1991 it was unable to function as intended because of the political and economic happenings that swept the country—the events of June and the devaluation of the dinar. The impact of the devaluation on the price of capital goods made it necessary to reassess all projects for young people. Serious doubts about the financial viability of some projects left many young people in the all too familiar position of having no future prospects. However, despite the turmoil of the times, 200,956 young people received assistance. Of that number, 123,258 found local initiative salaried jobs, but only 4,387 of the more than 200,000 found permanent employment. Last year was a year of difficulties across the board, particularly at the financial level, which would account for the failed start of an employment policy that promised to be ambitious. Indeed, the actual results fell far short of projections. For example, 12,641 cooperatives had not progressed beyond the planning stages as of 31 December 1991. A shortage of equipment, a lack of land, and an upward revision of costs were the major reasons behind this poor outcome. Had it succeeded, on the other hand, the initiative would have created 40,000 jobs, most of them in the farming sector. Another indicator is the number of young people enrolled in job training programs which dropped to 12,711 in 1991 from 14,954 in 1990. The 1992 figures are not yet known, but high hopes are not in order given the year's political and governmental instability. Conditions were not conducive to any improvement in the success rate. Investment, both public and private, remained weak in the face of the unknown effects of recently enacted economic measures, measures that will not readily generate jobs. Youth employment, which is dependent upon investment, remains at its lowest ebb.

During the first half of 1992, 2,875 youth cooperatives were created and 46,000 salaried jobs went to young people. Outcomes varied from one province to another and the larger cities experienced the most difficulties in providing jobs. Medium-sized cities like Bejaia and Chlef were relatively more successful.

Enrolling in an employment program is not the approach being taken by young people in 1992. While finding work remains their first priority, access to assistance services very often seems like combat training in the eyes of young people who are repelled by a rather unattractive administrative apparatus.

Job training should be made more available and the Ministry of Labor is said to be leaning toward associating more companies in the effort, as most of the work thus far has been done by training centers and municipalities. 1993 is expected to be a year of economic revitalization and job creation. But creating jobs for young people is the most difficult of all tasks involved in bringing about a steady economic recovery.

Financial Institutions Possible New Targets

93AF0315A Algiers LIBERTE in French 20 Dec 92 p 1

[Article by Lotfi Khiari: "Hold-Ups?"]

[Text] A series of armed robberies at financial institutions and travel agencies has taken the country by surprise. Although our laws anticipate such crime as a punishable offense, it is a new phenomenon in Algeria.

More surprising still is the ease with which the hold-ups were carried out. The robbery that occurred at the Air Algeria office in El Biar in broad daylight reveals how few, if any, security measures are in place to deal with this type of operation.

A meeting on that subject took place Thursday at the main offices of the wilayat. It was attended by the governor responsible for security, representatives of banking and financial institutions and officers from National Security and the gendarmerie. They met with the purpose of defining and implementing adequate security measures to protect financial institutions.

The officers of National Security and the gendarmerie made several suggestions, calling for the financial institutions to hire security specialists, and perhaps to install alarm systems and an automated payment system.

While the perpetrators of the hold-ups have not all been apprehended, a "fundamentalist connection" seems likely on the face of things.

One reason is that most of the hold-ups have taken place since the elections were suspended. Another is that antiterrorist measures have eliminated most of the armed Islamist movement's sources of funding, the most recent of which were charitable associations or organizations operating under the guise of charity which, in most cases, proved to be financing the Islamist circles.

Are the armed robberies at banks and travel agencies a sign that the Islamists' sources of funding have run dry? Without prejudging the investigations that are in progress, that hypothesis cannot be ruled out.

Whatever the case, the financial institutions targeted in these attacks must take their share of the blame for failing to enact adequate security measures. It is safe to bet that changes will rapidly take place as a result of Thursday's meeting.

Such changes can only help the fight against terrorism. At the same time the financial institutions will regain their credibility.

Research Projects at Sonatrach Discussed

93AF0345B Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
5 Jan 93 p 5

[Article by Ahmed Mesbah: "Oil and Gas: Research Fields"; first paragraph is EL MOUDJAHID introduction]

[Text] The activities of Sonatrach [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons] are not limited to marketing. It is also investing in research. The Boumerdes Research and Development Center (CRD) is responsible for that mission.

Marketing oil and gas is not Sonatrach's sole activity. It is also doing research. The Boumerdes Research and Development Center contributes to the promotion of this activity, which leads to the discovery of deposits and the optimization of their recovery rates. Laboratory activities and geologic drilling monitoring are the two vectors along which work at the center is oriented, Mr. Ait-Youcef, head of the study and planning department, indicated.

The laboratories regularly perform several types of specialized tests. They perform oilfield geology studies, deposit analyses, and oil and gas processing.

Several types of parameters are studied, including pressure and fluid consistency, as well as mud density.

The data thus collected are indispensable to understand deposits and help facilitate their development. These tests are performed upstream from oilfield operations, i.e., even before oil deposits are discovered.

As for studies of the deposits discovered, they involve gathering indications on the reservoir rock.

Fluid characteristics and predictions as to deposit output and behavior are determined through these laboratory analyses. Analyzing the behavior of deposits also makes it possible, among other things, to identify any pressure decline, and it leads to the use of secondary recovery processes.

The center also does not limit its work to research. It is responsible, in particular, for monitoring surface installations. These, in fact, are exposed to several hazards, including pipeline corrosion. The Center's mission, in this case, consists in looking for substitution materials consistent with the nature of the fluid.

Water and pollution problems that arise in southern units are also dealt with at the Center, Mr. Ait Youcef explained.

Assisted Recovery

For most deposits, recovery rates do not exceed 20 percent. Large fluid quantities are therefore lost unless other recovery methods are used.

This is where secondary or tertiary recovery comes in, although tertiary recovery is not yet used in Algeria. Secondary recovery, however, has been used since 1965, Mr. Ait Youcef pointed out.

Secondary recovery calls for water and gas injections, while tertiary recovery uses several other methods. There is chemical recovery, which uses water improved through the addition of chemicals; and recovery through special gases such as carbon dioxide. Another method that is also used is in-situ combustion, where oxygen is injected in order to burn any residues that cannot be recovered by means of pressure. Combustion ends as soon as oxygen is exhausted, Mr. Ait Youcef added.

Pilot injection (carbon dioxide) and chemical (improved water) injection experiments are performed in the laboratories, and the processes are fully mastered, Mr. Ait Youcef stated. All that remains to be done is to implement them in practice, in the field. Two deposits were selected to that effect. One is located southeast from Hassi-Messaoud, at Mesdar; the other (Tinfuye) lies north of In Salah.

Large surface installations must be acquired in order to implement these processes, and invitations to bid for the acquisition of compressors have already been issued. All the same, it will take several years to increase recovery rates. After secondary recovery was implemented, it took five years to achieve results, Mr. Ait Youcef concluded.

[Box, p 5]

To Produce More at Lower Cost

Sonatrach operational divisions commonly ask the CRD to perform research work for them.

Other research, however, is done at the CRD's initiative. The need to meet the company's practical needs pushes the CRD to undertake applied research in order to solve specific problems arising at drilling and production units.

This research directly contributes to achieving the company's objectives, namely to produce more and at lower cost.

The CRD is not directly involved in Sonatrach research activities; drilling programs are drawn up by the operational directorates. They are then implemented by other companies, i.e., ENTP [National Civil Engineering Company] and ENAFOR [expansion not given].

As far as services are concerned, the CRD performs analyses for Sonatrach's partners. Thus, information on deposits is available to Sonatrach, although prospecting is paid for by foreign companies. This prevents foreign companies from monopolizing this information.

Review of 1992 Social Initiatives 'Discouraging'

93AF0344B Algiers EL WATAN in French 31 Dec 92 p 5

[Article by F. Metaoui: "Too Many Imbalances in Society"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The year that ends today was a most difficult one. Algerians never had to endure so much pain and suffering. Economic disruption fueled by a serious political crisis ended up weighing heavily on a society searching for its balance. The situation in 1992 was therefore discouraging.

One government went; another came. The social safety net was thrown back into question. On 20 June 1992, the State suspended price support for all but a few staple products. This caused concern and apprehension in families.

For the second year in a row, the Social Security announced a deficit of 5 billion dinars, while some were doing all they could to take over the assets of that very Social Security. At the same time, social workers spoke up and talked of the marginalization of social centers by the State. Hospitals, except for a few, experienced huge management problems.

There was much talk about problems in the health sector, but the government found no practical solution. The drug shortage was painfully felt by the citizens. The government painted a dark picture: 85 percent of all pharmaceutical products were imported.

A drug list was drawn up. Physicians announced the creation of a Medical Association Council. Medical deontology was again the topic of the day.

In some public companies, the situation was not very bright. Workers were threatened with layoffs. The construction-civil engineering-housing sector was hard hit by the recession. In that sector, 95,000 workers had to wait several months to get paid. The housing crisis remained still more dramatic.

A National Housing Fund was created. It should help finance the construction of 60,000 housing units (at least this is what was announced under the annual plan). The national occupancy rate was 7.5 persons per housing unit. At the beginning of the year, officials indicated that 50,000 housing units would be delivered, including 25,000 financed by certain organizations. As the year ends, one-third, or a little under one third, of the program was completed.

Regulatory provisions were introduced to organize the allocation of subsidized housing. The OPGIs [expansion not given] (of all wilayat) were in bad shape; they owed the Treasury 70 billion dinars. In September, rents went up.

Personalized housing subsidies (APL) were promised to some households. In addition, 15,000 illegal buildings were found to exist in Algiers.

The environment kept deteriorating; ministers went on location. Several times during 1992, the need for a plan to rehabilitate heavily populated neighborhoods, which have become veritable sores, was emphasized. The juvenile population was the one most exposed to various ills. Two

million young people were unemployed. Statistics showed a 200,000 increase for this year (i.e., a need for jobs estimated at 18 percent).

Youth cooperatives, created to remedy the lack of jobs, did not yield the expected results. Administrative gridlock, often for no apparent reason, hindered the operation.

The Youth Employment Fund initiated by the government proved quite limited in view of the many applications filed by young people. Around midsummer, over 1,200 tons of equipment intended for these cooperatives were found to be waiting to be processed at the port of Algiers; they represented the tidy amount of 31 billion centimes.

According to the ONS (National Statistics Office), job seekers under 25 were the most numerous, accounting for 42.9 percent of the total.

1992 also saw the spectacular development of insecurity. Terrorism spread psychosis among the population. In universities, strikes and class interruptions multiplied at a staggering rate. There were many labor disputes in companies.

Support for Freedom of Expression Urged

93AF0229B Algiers AL-KHABAR in Arabic 16 Nov 92 p 3

[Article by Ihmaydah 'A.: "Abdessalam Cabinet: Is It Beginning of Troubles"]

[Text] On the morrow following the appointment of Belaid Abdessalam as head of the cabinet that has succeeded Sid Ahmed Ghazali's cabinet, some analysts expressed the view that the man who is returning to the seat of power could be the man for national dialogue and the reviver of hope to overcome the political dilemma and the tense security situation. Other analysts consider the appointment a revival of Boumedienism, expressing at the same time fear that this revival lacks the new sense of plurality that was also missing in Boumedienism and that was one of its main weaknesses.

But both sides have raised the question: Will Belaid Abdessalam elevate the the challenge and emerge from the Algerian "Bermuda triangle" safely?

Man and Method

Rilke, a German poet, said that method is the man. Another figure has said that man is the method. So who makes whom: Man or method? In the case of the current prime minister, it seems that method has made him. The Boumediene years left deep imprints on Belaid Abdessalam's personality. Instead of adapting to the post-October Algeria, he has tried to adapt the "pluralistic experiment" to Boumediene's rigid legacy, which was the outcome of a certain historical and political circumstance. Some may believe that the adaptation process tried by the current prime minister has lacked dynamism in the political dialectic and the flexibility dictated by the phase.

This condition has caused the current cabinet to enter into several struggle fronts, and some people view these fronts as gratuitous as long as they are premature. So what does this condition, i.e., launching a campaign against advocates of dialogue and national reconciliation and opening the door

of conflict with the media and the political parties, weak and restricted as these parties are, mean?

Can a democratic and respected state be created without free expression?

Open Fronts: Will the Crisis Be Solved?

To date, the fronts opened by the government have been external fronts involving the media, labor, and the parties. But this time, a front has developed from within by the dismissal of Justice Minister Mahi Behi. This dismissal could have been accomplished with greater decorum if it had been allowed to don the robe of resignation. But having been done in this stiff manner, the dismissal can only have a negative impact on the course of Belaid Abdessalam's government.

Moreover, the main question that now persistently imposes itself is: How can the security dilemma be overcome when the political path is blocked?

Recent months have proven that the political crisis can in no way be resolved with any Bonapartist method and that the key to the solution is in holding a true, actual, and serious dialogue with the influential forces in the political arena. This is what Mr. Fathallah, the Algerian Human Rights Association chairman, tried to emphasize in his latest statement, saying that the "association expresses its constant preoccupation with restoration of the people's legitimate right to express their will democratically through representatives whom the people elect with utter freedom."

Reaction to Property Recovery Decree Discussed

93AF0229C Algiers AL-KHABAR in Arabic 16 Nov 92 p 3

[Article by Kamal Jawzi: "In Wake of Decision to Recover State Property, What Will Be Fate of Discussions Between Government and Opposition"]

[Text] Can we disregard political parties when we are trying to preserve democracy?

This question is raised strongly when the public authorities adopt a decree to recover their real estate property that harbors the country's political organizations.

It is true that the embryonic form of this idea surfaced at a previous time. But conditions have changed somewhat since communication channels between the government and the opposition were opened. Silence on the issue of party offices was an element that helped open these channels. This is proven by the fact that a most prominent member of the FLN [National Liberation Front] Central Committee told us at one time that relations between the Supreme State Council and the FLN were not as bad as some people tried to depict them and that the government silence on the property issue is nothing but evidence of the Higher State Council's well-intentioned plan to open the door of discussion with the opposition, especially with the FLN. No matter what, raising this issue anew could lead to debate and to questions on the fate of the discussions that the council has launched with a number of political parties and on whether there is a firm connection between the two issues or

whether the decree is just a technical measure that could be reexamined far from the ongoing political debates.

By observing the opposition reactions to this decree, it is evident that the opposition is trying not to cause a confrontation and to keep the issue far from the political battle arena. Perhaps the FLN leadership statement reflects this approach clearly. So how can we interpret the issue, and how has the opposition understood the decree to recover state property?

Some see that this is an isolated act and that the problem can be solved through the existing institutions. But other parties see in the decree a premeditated act by some unidentified parties to reshuffle cards of the relations between the government and the political parties so these relations will be predominantly vague.

But it is difficult to take the second viewpoint seriously because the decision to recover state property is within the government jurisdiction. According to what has surfaced recently, there is harmony between the executive authority and the Higher State Council, or at least this is what has been highlighted by some official newspapers, unless this harmony exists only in some areas and not in others. If so, then the government will have added another front to the struggle fronts it is facing currently, such as the security situation and graft.

Citizens Deposit Valuables Fearing Home Searches

93AF0275B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
8 Dec 92 p 1

[Article by Karim Nasri: "Algerians Depositing Money and Jewelry in Banks"]

[Text] Astonishing: In recent days, Algerians have suddenly become enamored of banks. They seem to be abandoning the cookie jar in favor of bank safe deposit boxes. Both cash and jewelry are flooding in. What explains this phenomenal rush to the banks? Herewith, a few hypotheses...

A change in our "financial mores" has emerged in recent days. Citizens who up to now preferred to keep their money at home have been hurrying to deposit it in banks.

Liquid funds are not the only assets filling the coffers of financial institutions: According to many bankers, gold jewelry—usually "parked" in women's jewelry boxes—has also been brought to the banks for "protection." What explains the banks' allure to our fellow citizens? Is this progress? Does it show confidence in the state?

The various theories advanced here and there all agree that the stampede to the banks has been precipitated by hysteria engendered by certain persistent rumors since the announcement of the curfew. One rumor had it that the security services might be planning to confiscate large sums of money and valuables (jewelry) uncovered in searches of people's residences. According to another rumor, people's homes would be burglarized, probably by elements of the security services. You can even find people who swear they have witnessed or heard tell of thefts committed by police

while on duty manning roadblocks. It is the "sky is falling" syndrome all over again. In short, mass hysteria.

What is at the bottom of it? More than likely, in light of the tax collection campaign and the fight against fraud that will soon get under way, these rumors—like all the others—are being sown to divert attention and to make people deeply distrustful of the security forces, which are seriously engaged in the struggle against terrorism and corruption. Fundamentalists and people with Mafia ties are the real source of these idiotic rumors. In any case, Algerians who up to now have shunned banks have been bringing large sums of money to them in the last week. A young employee of CNEP [Algerian National Savings and Insurance Bank] says that "since Thursday, the branch has seen large deposits by savers." He adds he and his coworkers "have really earned our paychecks lately."

Bank directors we contacted also report large placements of funds by private individuals. Although not in a position to provide statistics, one indicated that deposits this week were substantially up from the previous week.

Other bankers, though agreeing with their colleagues, emphasize that the trend toward massive deposits dates back to early 1992. One of them even maintains the increase is due primarily to the fact that "checks are probably becoming more widely accepted."

But the majority of bankers we contacted are convinced this phenomenal financial flow is due to the rumors. If that is the case, one points out, it means attitudes of Algerians really have not changed, since they won't hesitate to withdraw their money again on a moment's notice.

One final theory: It seems that the dinar is becoming stronger and reportedly is no longer floundering. However that may be, this will be the first time that alarmist rumors have served to recover some of those billions of dinars floating around outside legal channels.

Hunger Strike at University Over Housing

93AF0271C Algiers *LIBERTE* in French 2 Dec 92 p 5

[Text] About 25 male and 95 female students at the ENS [Advanced Teacher Training School] in Kouba began a hunger strike on 30 November.

The strikers are occupying the administrative offices of their school as a sign of protest and to draw the attention of school officials to their "wanderings" [in search of housing].

In effect these students have nowhere to live, and this is not their fault, since they have tried everything.

A meeting was held on 17 November to study the housing situation affecting these students.

Attending the meeting were the directors of the university housing centers in Algiers, the directors of social services in the Center and in Hydra, as well as a representative of the supervisory ministry.

According to EL-KHABAR, certain decisions were made at the end of this meeting, particularly a promise by the director of the COSU [University Student Council] of

Hydra to provide housing for 105 students from the Kouba ENS. However, the campus at Hydra has a shortage of 216 beds (93 at Dely-Ibrahim, 63 at Beni-Messous, and 60 at the ITFC [expansion not given]).

As far as they are concerned, the student strikers have proposed various solutions, such as placing a hotel in Dely-Ibrahim, which is not fully used under the control of the Hydra University Student Council. Other proposals include making available dormitories at certain lycees and giving third priority to young women at the Ben-Aknoun student residence.

This last proposal had the support of the young women living there. However, the woman who is the director of the University Student Council there rejected the proposal without giving any reason.

This situation is presenting real problems, particularly for the young women, who will have to abandon their studies if present conditions continue. There is one consolation. It comes from the director of the school who, in consultation with the teachers, decided to rearrange the examination schedule for these "homeless" students.

As a result, examinations and make-up courses will be postponed until after the vacations.

Delays in Resolving Housing Crisis Criticized

93AF0296B Algiers *EL WATAN* in French 20 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by J. Loukil: "Oran: The Long Wait of the 'Relocated'"]

[Text] Oran—Exactly 54 families have been moved to what officials dare to call a relocation center (in Boulanger) that is in fact nothing but a sordid enclosure comprised of an old warehouse rotting from humidity. The torn canvas riddled with holes has fallen victim to the latest onslaughts of the weather.

Civil defense workers were called out only recently in the middle of the night to lend aid to families whose tents had been shredded by the wind.

Those responding were left speechless by the conditions in which men, women, and children a year-and-a-half old were forced to live. With nothing but canvas for shelter, families have dumped their meager belongings right on the ground: benches lined up in rows where they sleep side by side in order to keep each other warm, piles of dishes and basins in a corner, a gas burner on which the mother cooks heedless of the danger. Toilets are shared and there is one water faucet for everyone. Because they are the most vulnerable, most of the children have contracted bronchitis and asthma. Those attending school get up at 0600 to catch a bus for their old school downtown.

The elderly suffer from rheumatism. Most strikingly, in spite of it all, the people, most of them workers, still demonstrate great patience.

Nevertheless, anger is building and a feeling of rebellion spreading. How could it be otherwise, given the silence of local authorities who are in no hurry to find a solution to the drama experienced by those under their tutelage.

For the time being, 10 of the 54 families will soon see their calvary come to an end.

For them (other cases are under the APC [People's Communal Assembly]), the OPGI [expansion not given] is completing repair work on their building located at 5 rue Cavaignac, which was evacuated at the beginning of the year. When asked how long the work has taken, one OPGI deputy director said the nature of the work and its importance required a long time, adding that "the building should have been evacuated in 1990. Furthermore, squatters forced us to halt work for two months. One has to admit that the renters have set up quite a fuss about their case. What they actually want is new buildings."

Indeed, the thorny problem of housing is not easy to solve, but when confronted with exceptional situations, why not take exceptional measures?

The figure of 5,000 empty units in Oran has been rumored. This figure has been challenged, but not disproved. Could we not requisition housing?

In districts such as Sid El-Houari and St-Pierre, many buildings are on the verge of collapse.

OPGI officials say that most can be rehabilitated and that competent personnel exist. The problem remains one of means but also of how to persuade renters to leave their current housing and go live in tents for months at a time since we know only too well that such operations go on forever. Creating transit centers to house "relocated people" cannot be an option and is no solution to the basic problem.

Moroseness, Stagnation of Algiers Described

93AF0271B Algiers LIBERTE in French 2 Dec 92 p 11

[Article by Abdellah Rabah: "Daily Life in Algiers Is Gloomy"; first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] Algiers is one of those cities where it is painful to be young. It is a city where dreams are prohibited and where a vacuum and false hopes fill entire days by themselves for young people with nothing to do.

Algiers, unlike other capitals in the world where it is good to be alive because they are filled with cultural activity, is frozen in dullness, a dullness that, at every street corner, reminds us of the gloominess of an annoying, daily existence. Here time seems to have stopped and to have fallen on us with all of its weight, to the point that we cannot breathe.

As if insensitive to any change, Algiers is there, with its dormitory suburbs, its empty theaters, and its architectural incoherence waiting for some authority to clear it up.

This city, which has seen civilizations built on top of each other, and has given birth to so many artists and other persons of culture, does not deserve to be reduced merely to the bricks and mortar that adorn it. The grandeur of a city is not measured by its geographic area or by its skyscrapers, but rather by the activities that take place within it. As a result, our capital only lives to the rhythm of the few, rare, and sporadic festivals held in it.

At present even the most disillusioned person walking through Algiers ends up by realizing the extent of the disorder existing there. In effect, if we had occasion to walk along the boulevards of Algiers from one end to the other, we could not fail to notice the displays of tobacco products sold even on the sidewalks, the pushing and shoving at every bus stop, the long lines before the movie theaters, where a poster for an erotic film is enough by itself to attract a crowd of people who come to relieve their frustrations.

This state of anarchy and disorder is the result of unrestrained laxity on the part of the authorities charged with the protection of the social environment, on the one hand, and the lack of civic pride among the citizens, on the other hand.

It is true that the behavior of each and every person counts for something in the deterioration that our capital is experiencing. However, the fact still remains that until now the authorities have not been concerned about resolving problems which they know about, since they have been reported to them, and which are for them alone to handle. The example of the haze of smoke which covers the eastern part of Algiers, morning and night, and pollutes one of the most densely inhabited parts of the capital well illustrates the unconcerned attitude that our leaders display. Apparently, they still prefer to give us illusions with their elegant speeches, when ending such a scourge is worth more than a thousand speeches, however well they sound.

This is only to mention one among a multitude of other problems waiting for someone to take an interest in.

Algiers is there, in its eternal state of dullness, its streets swarming with people eternally walking along them, its cafes choked with idle and unemployed youth, its dilapidated movie houses, its theaters with floors covered with dust, without the activity of plays which would give them life, waiting for someone to give them back the gaiety and splendor of yesteryear. Finally, Algiers is waiting for someone to give it back its life.

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